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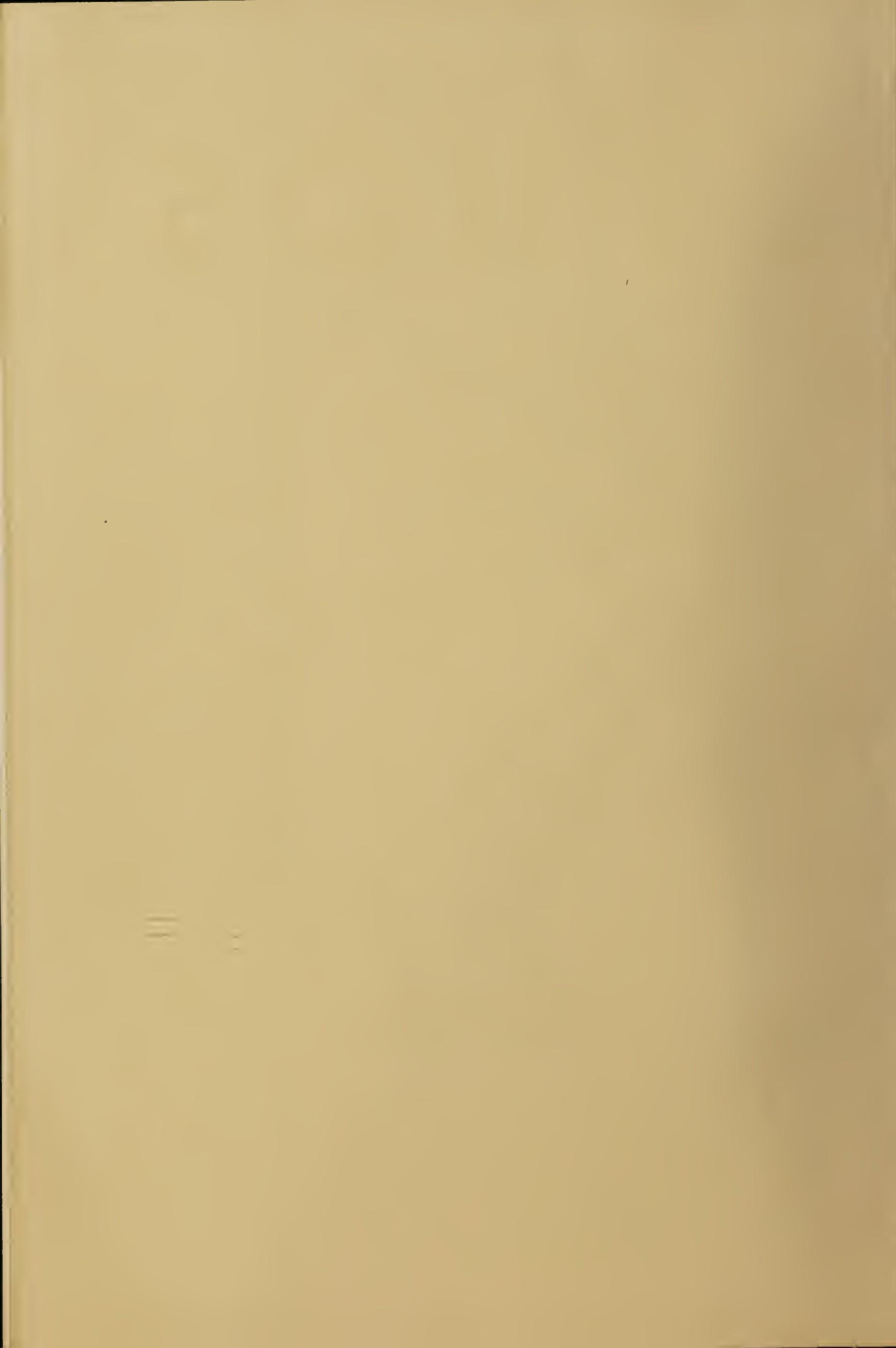
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# *ethos*

fall 1962



# **E T H O S**

**Fall  
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**Emmanuel College  
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# Symbolic Structure in *All the King's Men*

Mary F. Courtney, '63

Twentieth century America has witnessed many real-life political dynasty exposés. In *ALL THE KING'S MEN*, Robert Penn Warren takes this familiar political pattern and artfully expands it into an allegory of modern man.

The novel's centrally focused Willie Stark is the self-made man so typical of our American heritage. His aspirations to a career in public service are honorable and his ideals are nobly and passionately promoted among the voters of Mason City who have been waiting for a simple, man-of-the-soil reformer-hero. Sadly enough, his election as governor is but the beginning of an inglorious descent from the soapbox of frank honesty to self-destruction via compromise and expediency.

Willie is the novel's central personality but it is Jack Burden's story. Although Willie Stark's lackey, Jack tries to remain aloof from the white-faced, black-handed mobsters and from the manipulations of the rallies, elections and business deals, by simply believing that he is not a part of them.

"It might have all been different . . . you got to believe that." From Willie Stark's dying breath Jack Burden and Anne Stanton take a new-found confidence in man's ability to make his own world. Following Milton's Adam and Eve, mindful of their responsibility for their sin and aware of their fallen natures, they are able to leave the warmth and numbness of the womb of unreal innocence and "go into the convulsion of the world, out of history into history and the awful responsibility of Time."

*All The King's Men* is Jack Burden's story, his struggle to be born again, "not of woman" but of guilt, contrition and expiation. Warren himself tells us, "The novel was never intended to be a book about politics. Politics merely provided the framework story in which the deeper concerns, whatever their final significance, might work themselves out." Here it is my concern to attempt to work out at least a suggestion of some final meaning through an investigation of the symbolic structure of the text.

It may be helpful and pertinent to preface my remarks on symbols in *All The King's Men* by a description of the cumulative effect of Warren's individual symbols. It is appropriate to use his own image of the spider web. Every symbol is an intricate, restrained strand of the web of meaning, every thin

fiber is connected in some way to every other fiber. They are so entangled that each one reacts upon every other one to make a continually vibrating complex.

As a working frame of reference in my discussion of the symbolic structure I would like to present Gertrud von le Fort's definition of symbol in *The Eternal Woman* as "a sign or image through which ultimate metaphysical realities and modes of being are apprehended not in an abstract manner but by way of a likeness . . . hence the language of an invisible reality becomes articulate in the realm of the visible."

With this descriptive definition in mind we may initially consider, what's in a title? Is Warren's peculiar specimen merely a catchy abstract from a nursery rhyme with one dimensional insinuations? Having read the novel with its profoundly Christian presentation of individual man and his relationship with mankind and with God, the title seems to fit into the pattern as a symbolic expression of some of the author's basic ideas and his convictions about the novel's broad themes. Considering them in a logical retrospection, perhaps it is first in the title and then again in the epilogue that we can find the combination to the ultimate hidden meaning. Willie Stark is not the hero-King, he is Humpty Dumpty, "who had a great fall." God is King,

and Willic Stark is only a grotesque pastiche of all of the needs and ambitions of all of the voters who have set him "on a wall" in the governor's position. He exists because their "needs" are his "justice." The King is Warren's symbol of the absolute between Willie as symbolic of the often artificial and contingent needs of the voters, and "all the King's men" who have the necessary responsibility of free will. God is King and all humankind are "King's men." In this light we can distinguish the obvious tragic texture of Willie Stark's drama from the less perceivable moral victories of many other characters who are beginning to realize themselves. We see the death of a fabricated man and the birth of many real men, Jack Burden, Anne Stanton, Lucy Stark, etc. . . .

Of the symbols of the book that support this thesis, the birth symbol is perhaps the most striking. If carefully traced it gives proof of the true protagonist of the novel, not Willie Stark as political dictator, but Jack Burden in his struggle for self-identification. It is through Jack's rebirth that we come to an understanding of the "indivisible reality" of the story. At the outset of the novel Jack wants to hide in a world out of time, unrelated to the past and the present, divorced from experience. He says to the reader, "If I didn't look around it would not be true that somebody had opened the gate with the creaky hinges, and that is a wonderful principle for a man to get hold of. I had got hold of the principle out of a book and . . . I had hung on to it for grim death." Jack shrinks from the discovery of evil, imperfection in the scheme of things. He has seen evil but does not want to acknowledge its presence in himself or to be responsible for evil actions. He constantly struggles to resist rebirth, wanting to retain a womb-state of innocence, like "the sad little foetus, . . . its eyes are blind . . . it is warm in its not-knowing." The paradox of his struggle to remain aloof from the responsibilities of his nature is that while he tries to submerge himself in nature he only comes to a discovery of the "separateness that is identity." He is embryonic and amoral until the "bright, beautiful, silvery, soprano scream" of his mother in her nightmare, symbolically in the struggles of labor, thrusts him out into the world of guilt and commitment. With his recognition that man cannot prolong "moral

neutrality," he wakes from the self-induced oblivion of the "Great Sleep" and the moral determinism of the "Great Twitch."

Intimately associated with Jack's rebirth is his Telemachus image. In reality his research into history and into biography is his search for an acceptable father image. With the acceptance of his own responsibility in the death of Judge Irwin, he is baptized. Ironically, this rebirth is the end of the search for his paternity. With the physical death of his real father comes the birth of an acceptable image of both father and mother. Jack has lost three fathers in discovering the "separateness that is identity." He loses Willie Stark, a substitute father image, the Scholarly Attorney, an unacceptable "good and weak" image and Judge Irwin, his real father. He has "dug up the truth and the truth always kills the father." Thus, we see Warren's birth symbol imposed on his death symbol and on his Telemachus symbol. Jack is symbolic of the displaced person torn with the "terrible division of our age." And his story is the symbolic search of every disassociated man for some order in a world of violence.

Each one of Warren's characters is a dramatic symbol that enforces and qualifies the meaning structure of self-identification. Initially, Willie Stark is a symbol of man's struggle toward integration in terms of his whole nature. "He was trying to live up to his notion of a high destiny." Each member of the political machine working in harmony is a symbolic correlative for the integration within "the Boss." But when the Boss tries to operate independently of the very people who have created him, he falls like Humpty Dumpty. Willie was baptized, reborn, with the conviction that "good must come from evil" because "evil is all you have to work with." But Willie becomes infected with a sickness, "galloping political anemia." He became "all and only the one thing" and nothing else. When Willic defects to the side of pure idealism, in the instance of the dream hospital, he loses sight of the necessary cooperation between the ideal and the animal in man's nature. The hospital, simply from the fact that it is never built, is the eternal symbol of man's limited perception of life's ultimate moral purpose. The unfinished ideal is symbolic of man's continuous and necessary struggle to create good out of a fallen nature.

Willie as the man of fact says: "the truth

is going to be told and I'm going to tell it," and "God helps those who help themselves." In opposition we have Adam Stanton, the man of the ideal. It is when Willie becomes the man of idea, though actually his ideal hospital seems to be a guilt compensation, and Adam Stanton becomes the man of fact, it is then that they destroy each other. Adam's shooting Willie reveals that he is confident that the end justifies the means and that he is assured of the final significance of good and evil in the situation. They are both "incomplete with the division of the age" and doomed to failure. Willie and Adam are symbolic of a distorted image of man as contrasted with Jack's effort to have *no* image. In a world in which good and evil are in everlasting relation to each other, to believe in one and not the other is to become as Willie or as Adam, either the man of fact or the man of idea. Willie had attempted a practical balance between the animal evil of Tiny Duffy and the intellectual honesty of Hugh Miller of the "clean hands, pure heart, and no political past." But in the course of practice he stops believing in absolute goodness and becomes a law unto himself, a pseudo-omnipotent god of expediency.

Sadie and Sugar-Boy are symbolic of man in a counter-predatory reaction, on a sub-human level of nature. The limitations and deformities of their individual natures form the basis of a value system which effects a compensation for these limitations. Sadie has a faith in an eye-for-an eye code and Sugar-Boy manages to stay behind a helpless machine that surrenders its power into his hands. Tiny Duffy, the embodiment of all that is raw and sub-rational, becomes "in a crazy kind of way, the other self of Willie Stark, and all the contempt and insult which Willie Stark was to heap on Tiny Duffy was nothing but what one self of Willie Stark did to the other self because of a blind, inward necessity." Lucy Stark is the symbol of a traditional faith in God, a power before which the codes of all the others pale. She affirms belief in the potentiality of man, belief in the Christian enigma of God's omnipotence and man's simultaneous moral responsibility. Sadie has no defence against the loss of the Boss. She ends in a sanitarium. Sugar-Boy sinks into complete uselessness, "perhaps he would live forever and outlive everything and his nerve would go and he

would sit, morning after morning while the gray winter rain sluiced down the high windows, in the newspaper room of the public library, a scrawny bald little old man in greasy tattered clothes bent over a picture magazine." Lucy is the one character able to endure the crisis because her hierarchy of values transcends the unreality of a non-spiritual system.

The nature symbols of the novel are abundant and add to the qualification and definition of the many themes of the story. Willie Stark's tragedy lies in the fact that he lost sight of the relationship between man and nature, that good must be built out of the bad in nature. Highway 58 is a symbol of the straight, unimpeded ideal imposed on a dense, uncontrolled natural world of jungle growth, cows, possum, and moccassin. Willie, a traveler on Highway 58, becomes hypnotized by an ideal, the "black line," and speeds past a consideration of the brute, natural world. His downfall is symbolic of the disintegration, "the terrible division of the age," again, modern man's attempt to control the external world through selfish will unguided by understanding. "The ectoplasmic fingers of the mist" reach out to the riders of the "hearse" of a car, like the threads of the spider web, to involve them in nature, to involve them in themselves, to kill them if need be, to let them live the lives of whole men. Jack struggles to lose himself in mauve dreams, in the water dive, in the contemplation of oak leaves, in "a long dream of sleep itself, dreaming of sleep, sleeping and dreaming of sleep infinitely inward into the center." All of his romantic self-suffocation only brings him inevitably to the realization of his identity. His perception and acceptance of the real project him from a constant state of being into a more human state of becoming.

Warren lets Jack Burden describe every character in the story by a concentration on eyes. Cass Mastern of the "dark, wide-set, deep eyes which burned out of the photograph," Hugh Miller of the "steady, protruding eyes," and Mr. Byram White whose eyes were "as numb and expressionless as a brace of gray oysters on the half shell." Jack, in telling his story in retrospect, is feeling for an understanding of what has really happened, both to himself through his participation in history and through him by his

actions, who and what the characters were meant to be, and how blind he had been to the significance of the past. Eyes are traditionally the mirrors of the soul and it could be more than coincidence that Cass Mastern's suffering and ruin in the "common guilt of man" was reflected in his eyes, that Hugh Miller of the "pure heart" had his honesty written in his eyes, and that Mr. Byram White, "man of no more initiative than a wet washrag," had "numb, quick blinking eyes like a dog." Man is indeed what Shakespeare calls "a little microcosm" and Robert Penn Warren has used every suggestive characteristic of man's physical and behavioral nature in its constant state of flux to add dimension to the complex character portraits.

The representation of history in *All The King's Men* approaches symbolic significance. "History is blind, but man is not," says Hugh Miller. "The meaning of moments passes like the breeze that scarcely ruffles the leaf of the willow." History is morally neutral and Jack Burden, as the protégé of history, tries to effect a similar moral neutrality. History is symbolic of a fleeting montage of seemingly purposeless causes and effects. The good and evil are so complex that man cannot seem to perceive any ultimate good or evil from them. One event, as an isolated incoherent fact, is evil, but as juxtaposed and logically associated with the past and with the present through human understanding, becomes one stitch in a tapestry, one filament of a spider web and has qualifications of both good and evil. A naturalistic approach, symbolized by Jack Burden's deterministic "Great Twitch," is totally inadequate to explain the metaphysical implications of the novel. Jack must come to accept original sin as a reality, and his individual guilt, repentance, and absolution by atonement as a means of attaining a sane approach to human existence and man's position in history. The "spider web" of history is a reminder of the limitations of human understanding, of man's inability to judge the events that were close upon him. Jack, the student of history, comes to a realization of the justice superimposed upon the injustice in a mode of being that man can never fully know. He is obliged to shoulder the guilt of his own action. Through self-examination Jack discovers his own complicity with Sadie, Tiny and Adam in the death of Willie, and his responsibility in the suicide

of his father. He realizes "man's moral responsibility for the illusion of nature which he creates and which involves him inextricably in history."

Perhaps Warren's "Cass Mastern" exemplum is as artistic a piece of parallel subplot as contemporary fiction has seen. This episode is a symbolic interlude, a presentation of a Christian experience of sin, humility, repentance and hope, of man working out his salvation through the process of transgression, acknowledgment of guilt and contrition. Mastern's story is an inverted contrast to Jack's story, the story of his mother and her adultery and of the unforeseen effects of this long-forgotten event. Mastern is important as a clue to the author's point of view towards the meaning of Jack Burden's search for an answer to the dilemma of his age. Cass Mastern had accepted the responsibility for the "vibration set up in the whole fabric of the world by my act . . . so that no man could know the end." He had faith in man's ability to retain enough of innocence in the midst of evil to "do a little justice," he had "hope of Grace" for the ends which were beyond his knowledge, and he had love for the "others who suffer for my sin, the innocent." He accepts the mystery that is life, that escapes absolute understanding. He accepts his free will which could never act in complete certainty, a free will which would always be "tending towards the darkness."

If the entire novel is taken as a dramatic monologue, the first-person point of view is symbolic. We can get at an understanding of Warren's interpretation of the "Boss" only through an acceptance of the perception of the story as experienced by Jack Burden. Jack's reconstruction of the story in the light of his rebirth (sustained by the symbols) is a means of defining to himself what actually did happen to him. This postulate requires that all of the imagery of the novel grow out of Jack Burden's mind. He is feeling his way back over territory he had thought familiar, re-exploring it in an attempt to master and explicate the knowledge brought to him implicitly through his rebirth. We get the alternation involved in the presentation of Jack Burden as he actually lived the events, simultaneously superimposed on Jack Burden as he attaches meaning to them in retrospect. The tension and conflict produced by this alternation do more than characterize

Burden. Warren's choice of Burden's peculiarly oblique point of view is one index of his rigorous approach to the mystery of good and evil. The dramatization of the assassination of a political boss, told through the vision of Jack Burden is brought to us through a medium (first-person narrator) which dramatizes the limits of human understanding dynamically. Burden, the protagonist, through an awareness of the impossibility

of a clear-cut answer to the problem of evil as "the index of God's glory," finds that he can face the accusations of the past and the "awful responsibility" of the future. He finds faith, hope and most important, love, and like Anne Stanton, "in loving was also re-creating himself." Warren's imperative in his epigraph is probably the climactic symbolic index to the meaning structure of the novel. "Mentre che la speranza ha fior del verde."

## Ritual

Blood-red lantern-flies  
And molly-golden whisper-bugs  
Dance together on a pale summer moon  
In nearing flame, like candles—bright,  
Tempting hands to warm themselves around.

Souls and danger, life and death  
In minuets of passion float  
Close together, now apart,  
Not touching sides but courting  
Swift annulment in a blaze.

Red—  
Gold—  
Spiral, whirl,  
Closer—  
Faster—  
Down, around;  
Near—  
And nearer,  
Touch—  
And part;  
Nearer,  
Nearer,  
Nearer—  
Gone.

*Carol Ann Glowacki, '63*



ROB

# The Same Slow Beat

Rosemary Connors, '63

Jeb's car jolted to a stop at the base of the hill. "Damn, road's not made for anything but a horse!" He climbed out and stood by the car. It had been hot during the day and a thin dull finish of dust had settled over the car and over him. Jeb rubbed his forehead with the sleeve of his shirt leaving a streak of dirt along one side of his face. Finally, he picked up the packages from the back seat and started climbing the hill.

The sun caught the cabin at an angle bleaching the walls into a drab, half-light. Rocking back and forth on the porch, the woman sat with her back to the sun watching her curved shadow cut sharply into the yard. At first, she took no notice of the figure coming toward her but stared out into the yard, rocking and talking to the dog that lay at her side. "Jake used to like to see that shader, used to say it made like that was two of me settin' here rockin' and waitin' fer him to come in. Hear that, dog?" She kicked the mound of fur that had curled itself at her feet but the dog only stirred and wound itself up more tightly.

She went on, still talking to the dog. "He used to be a fine sight, comin' up the path, Jake was. I remember the first day he brought Abel out into the fields. He was mighty proud. I was settin' here watchin' them come back. Abel ridin' on that mule, his legs danglin' down and bouncin' off her ribs—and Jake jus' sort of trudgin' right along side, kind of tired like but proud that he finally had a son with him. Right near broke his heart when Abel run off to war the way he did—would've been here now if Abel 'd been in the field that day. But you can't keep a boy like that here. She poked the dog again—he sure liked to have a wrestle

with you, dog, carryin's on like I never seen before." Then she stopped and saw the man coming up the path. "Abel, Abel, that you?" she called, but her voice was old and the man heard nothing. The rocker stopped and she gripped the porch railing.

"Evenin', Ma'am. It's Jeb, Jeb Barker, from the store." His voice cut through the silence. "You alright—didn't give you a fright comin' up on you like that, did I?" He leaned against the porch step, a tall man with a tanned face and hard, lean body that spoke of hours spent in the sun.

"Oh, Jeb, it's you." She sank back into the chair. Her hair, thin and grey, was pinned back in a loose knot and hung limply around her face. "I was settin' here jus' talkin' to this here hound. Puts me in mind of the days when Jake used to be comin' up the path. He was a fine sight—drivin' that cussed old Beulah, stubbornest mule that ever lived. But right fine—all white with those gray streaks. An' he'd be climbin' up after her—right about this time of day—with the sun all streaky behind him. Used to say there's no better time of day." She broke off suddenly and stared down at her lap. The dress she wore was old, and the blue print had faded into the pale, no-color of a summer dawn. She smoothed it over and over again and tiny blue veins stood out, crisscrossed along her hands.

Jeb shifted his weight and as the stair creaked, the old woman looked up, remembering that he was there. "Here, boy, you don't be standin' there like that, you bring 'em up." She stopped again. "Ella-mae, things from town is here."

The girl that appeared in the doorway came slowly, drying her hands on a yellow, flowered apron. Her hair, black and shiny,

was bound back with a green ribbon matching her dress. The heat had caused strands of it to escape and curl in damp spirals around her neck.

"Evenin', kind lady—the staples from town have arrived." Jeb made a sweeping, half-bow, awkwardly because of the packages.

Ella-mae laughed and a pale streak of pink colored her cheeks. "Oh, Jeb, it's you. Didn't hear the car—anythin' wrong?"

"Nope, jus' couldn't make the road—guess the hill was too much. Where'll I put this stuff?"

She laughed again and turned back into the house. "You look like an old peddler, settin' there," she called over her shoulder. "Bring 'em in here—in the kitchen."

Jeb brushed past the rocker but the old woman sat staring out into the yard. He walked through the house, laid the packages on the kitchen table, and turned to Ella-mae. She had hung the apron over a chair and straightened her dress that looked cool and green as early spring.

"Where were you? I waited and waited and you never came." He stood facing her and caught her hands in his. "You never came. I waited there—waited till after dark but . . . ."

"Oh, Jeb, you think I wanted not to come? But I couldn't. It can't be like this—me runnin' down, meetin' you by the creek and nobody ever knowin' or ever bein' able to go anyplace." The words came in short, gulping breaths.

Jeb reached out and grabbed her by the shoulder. A strand of hair fell across her face and he brushed it back. "But why? Why all of a sudden it's so wrong? I want to marry you—to take you into town and say to everybody, this here's my wife. Can't you get that? I'm sick of all this too, but you're the one. We can live over the store, you and Ma, even though she can't remember who I am one time from the next."

Ella-mae stood quiet, shredding a corner of the rough, brown bags. "Can't you see. She'll never leave here, never, till she sees Abel walking back up that path. And he ain't never goin' to come. You think I like stayin' here day after day, cleanin' this house and listenin' to her talk about Abel, Abel, Abel. Her precious son. Her precious dead son." She faltered and sat down at the table burying her face in her hands.

Jeb leaned over and kissed the back of her neck. "Don't, don't do that. Listen, I'll tell her—she'll like it in town. She can watch for him there if she's so sure he's comin'." He smiled and stroked her hair. "Got that dress on today. Always was my favorite. Show up those cat's eyes of yours."

"Jeb, Jeb, don't." She pulled away from his touch.

Suddenly they heard the old woman's voice. "Ella-mae, where are you? You hear me?" She limped across the bare floor.

"Ma, what you doin'? You know you ain't supposed to be up and around." Ella-mae's voice shook and she wiped away the traces of tears.

"Ella-mae, you hush up. That city doctor ain't goin' to tell me I can't even walk around my own house." She had forgotten that anyone else was in the room. Then she saw Jeb. "You still here? This here's all we need. You best be gettin' along."

"Oh, ma. Jeb's jus' tellin' me the town news. No need to hurry him."

"He ain't got no cause to stay." The old woman frowned. "Can't have strangers hangin' around. It don't look right."

Ella-mae's hand tightened on the back of the chair. "Ma, Jeb and me have something to tell you." She glanced at Jeb and he nodded.

"You see, it's like this . . . ." Jeb began.

But suddenly the old woman lost interest in the kitchen and the people there. "Can't see the hill from here," she said, starting back toward the porch.

Jeb stared after her for a minute before saying anything. "Ella-mae, she's got to listen sometime. Can't you make her—if she won't listen to me?"

Ella-mae walked over to the window. "I'll try," she barely whispered. "Jus' go—please, jus' go."

He strode through the cabin. Then he stopped, blotting out the light in the doorway. "Ella-mae, c'mere a minute, will you?"

She came to the doorway. "Did you forget somethin'?"

Jeb just stood for a minute looking at her. Then he said, "Be down at the old hickory tree. I'll be waitin'. But don't make me wait too long." He bounded off the porch and down the hill without waiting for her answer.

She gripped the porch railing, looking

after his stiff, straight back. He kept on walking, knowing she watched, yet refusing to turn around. "Jeb, wait, I'm comin'." She called it softly but her mother's voice cut through her own.

"Ella-mae, I tell you. He's comin' tonight. I jus' feel it and this time I know he's comin'. I was settin' out there—watchin' the light go down from the ridge and I could see him come up—jus' like your pa used to—with his arms swingin' out and dust all over his shirt." She wandered back into the house, muttering to herself.

Ella-mae moved back from the porch, losing sight of the distant figure at the foot of the hill. "Ma, what're you doin' in here? I don't need no help." She started piling cans and boxes on the table. Then she stopped and stood looking at her mother.

The old woman had pulled open a cupboard, brought a heavy, cut-glass pitcher and held it, crooning to herself as she fingered the rough whirls of the design. "It's mine—it's nice. He always wanted nice things. He'll probably bring all sorts of things when he comes—but nothin' as nice as this."

"Ma, ma, listen to me." Ella-mae picked up the apron from the chair, folding and re-folding the smooth creases. "He ain't never comin'—not tonight, not any night. Jus' cause some voice in that head of yours says he is—that don't mean it's goin' to happen."

The old woman stopped fingered the glass. She seemed not to have heard. Then, she set the pitcher back in the cupboard and faced Ella-mae. "I tell you he's comin' back—and he's comin' tonight. You're jus' showin' your spite. You never did like him—your own brother—even when you was kids, always fightin' and hollerin'. You'll see. You'll see."

Ella-mae felt the tears on her face but she made no effort to stop them. She picked up a package from the table then put it down again. "Ma, I gotta tell you. Jeb and me, Jeb, well, we're gonna get married and soon, now, this summer. And we'll go to town, live there. You can watch for Abel there."

The old woman stared at her. Then she turned and started to walk back to the porch. "Ma, where are you goin'—didn't you hear me?" Ella-mae's voice sounded thin and strange in her own ears.



"Abel's comin' tonight. I have to be there, on the porch when he comes. Jus' waitin' to see him swing his arms like he had nothin' else in the world to do—kind of makes you feel good to see him like that. He'll be tired after that long walk from town—be glad when he makes the hill."

She left the kitchen stopping before a small, rough-wood chest in the corner of the bedroom.

Ella-mae cried out, a soft, almost animal-sound of pain. Her apron fell to the floor and she kicked it out of the way. She watched the old woman draw up the top of the chest, still talking to herself in low broken snatches.

From the top of the chest, she brought out a large patchwork quilt. The outer covering was hidden and the plain blue ticking was all that showed. She opened it awkwardly tracing the lavish green, blue, and yellow patches with one hand. "He always liked this one," she was still talking to herself. "Star of the sea, he always said he was goin' to sea. Maybe that's why he liked it so much." She laid it aside and thrust her arms deep into the chest, pulling out a pair of thin, muslin sheets.

The sofa in the main room of the cabin matched the mustard-colored walls. The old woman piled the quilt on the single, straight-backed rocker and stood for a moment getting her balance. She made up the sofa carefully, smoothing the sheets and pulling the bright quilt over the top.

"There now, all ready. He'll like it after all them army things." She chuckled under her breath surveying the room with satisfaction. Then she hobbled back to the porch and sat in the rocker now totally eclipsed in the shade. The slow, easy creak of the chair was the only sound. A crow cawed and was still.

Ella-mae watched the ritual in the living room silently. The light had dwindled until she could barely discern the outlines of the furniture. Then she walked to the doorway of the cabin. The old rocker kept the same slow beat. A slight breeze lightened the heat of the day and she lifted her hand as if to cup the coolness to her face.

She stared down the hill past the bent place in the road and watched the shadow of the hickory tree creep longer and longer across the road. "Like somebody painted it there," she thought. "Seems like every branch is set, jus' so. It's pretty now—all the leaves kind of gray-green and shiny." She strained her eyes against the last glare of the sun, trying to pick out Jeb's outline. But the car was gone and she could see nothing. Her

fingers gripped the door of the cabin and her knuckles showed white. The car was gone and she could see nothing.

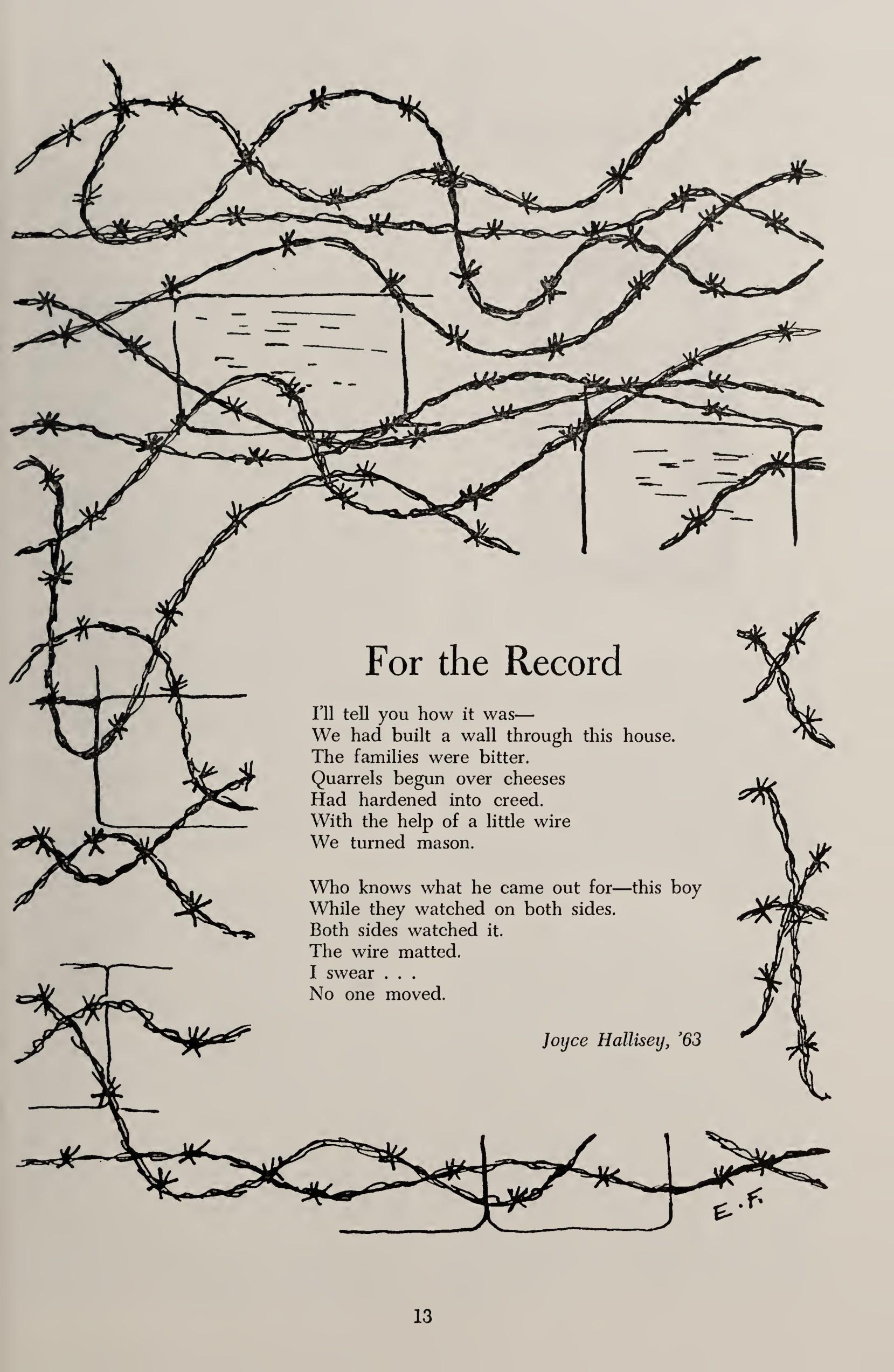
Suddenly she thought, "I'm gonna run, run down the hill and past that old tree and straight into town. Run like Abel and me used to, till our breath was gone and we fell on the grass till it came back. Run and feel the wind blow through my hair all cool and shivery." She shut her eyes so tightly that she could feel darts of pain across her forehead. "Come back, jus' please, please come back."

"Jeb?" she called it softly. Her mother turned and saw her in the doorway. Ella-mae looked past her and leaned all her weight against the doorway as though the effort to stand alone was too great. She willed to see him come, to hear the sound of his car, or even his whistle. . . .

"Ella-mae, Ella-mae, you listenin' to me?" The old woman stopped rocking, "You look mighty strange there. You better save your strength. Abel'll need a lot of waitin' on once he comes."

"Yes, ma." She barely whispered the words. "Ma, you comin' in to supper?"

The old woman began to rock again. "Can't eat till he's here. You oughta know that. Set the table with the pitcher, too. He'll like that. We'll be in soon—soon's he gets up the hill."



## For the Record

I'll tell you how it was—  
We had built a wall through this house.  
The families were bitter.  
Quarrels begun over cheeses  
Had hardened into creed.  
With the help of a little wire  
We turned mason.

Who knows what he came out for—this boy  
While they watched on both sides.  
Both sides watched it.  
The wire matted.  
I swear . . .  
No one moved.

*Joyce Hallisey, '63*

E.F.

# Heraclitus and the Blue Cat

Kathleen Powers, '63



Jasper was a blue cat. This fact was not looked upon as being at all unusual in the land where he lived because there everything was blue. Jasper belonged to a blue mathematician-philosopher who spent all of his time with a slide rule, mumbling and trying to find the essence of blue.

"Blueness makes the world go round," he had once intimated to Jasper, and Jasper had disgustedly wrapped his yard-long tail around the doorknob and let himself out of the room.

The blue mathematician-philosopher to whom Jasper belonged was named Heraclitus Ariscarte (his father had been a philosopher too). Scarty, as we must call him for all practical purposes, went to bed at five o'clock every morning after talking to his slide rule for several hours; he was up every day in time for four-fifteen tea wearing the same blue professorial gown, and on Mondays he always had cakes with his tea. He was, in short, a creature of habit. On Fridays he sometimes talked to his cat. By then it had been a hard week and anyone would know better than to think that he was having hallucinations if the cat answered him. Jasper usually believed in answering

because by then it had been a hard week for him, too, and he got sick of listening to Scarty expound his very mathematical-philosophical theories when he was not answered. Most of it sounded kind of watered down to him, and he found it amusing on one occasion to recall that most philosophers did not need to depend on the companionship of their slide rules.

The day which Scarty later brought into question began much the same as any other day when he rose at four-ten for four-fifteen tea. The only thing which made this day different was that this day there were visitors for tea. Jasper had watched them come up the winding blue walk; he saw the blue-bells at the sides of the walk sway gently as they passed. One of the men was seven feet tall; when he stood next to the short man he made him look fatter and shorter than he really was.

"Good afternoon, Sirs," Jasper greeted. It was Friday again.

"May we speak to Dr. Scarte, please." It was the tall one speaking with a heavy accent.

"Skip the formalities, Sir—he prefers to be called just plain Scarty. I'm not sure, but I think it's because he wants people to think he's like everyone else."

"Really!" The round little man raised his left eyebrow up to his hairline which proved not to be very far up.

Jasper wound his tail up like a corkscrew so it wouldn't get in the way when he left the room. "Do make yourselves comfortable, Gentlemen," he urged; he watched warily while the round man smiled at the smallest blue wicker chair. "The sofa is very comfortable," he suggested, as he wrapped his tail around the blue wicker chair and left the room with it.

He thought Scarty looked very impressive in his blue gown today as he had not yet

remembered to put on his wig. Jasper always had thought that it hid his best parts.

"Foreigners," said Jasper matter of factly as he put down the chair. "They're white."

"Silence, cat. They'll hear you." Scarty absently reached for his slide rule, picking up his wig instead. He shook it for a moment, and when it didn't rattle put it down again.

Jasper put his paw on his nose and hoped Scarty couldn't see him smile. He was delighted when the professor minced out of the room, forgetting his wig.

It wasn't until they sat down for tea that the men stated their reason for visiting. Until this time they had been staring at the blue professor as though he were something from out of this world, but by tea-time they realized that it had been a long week.

"I have run into a minor difficulty with the problem of change," the tall pale man began in a stilted manner. "You see . . . ."

"Yes, yes, of course I see." Scarty straightened his glasses and twisted the fingers of one hand into the fingers of the other hand. "Of course, of course, now where is my slide rule?"

The tall man began again; "To me it appears that nothing in the world is at a standstill and that everything is in a continuous flux."

"Yes, yes, what is your name? I don't believe we've met before. I'm Doctor Heraclitus Ariscarte."

"I know. The name's Jones." Jasper thought that his voice had grown weaker.

"Yes, Jones," the little round man nodded vigorously.

Jasper had had experience with this type of sport before and there was only one way to cope with it. His whiskers began to droop and before he knew it he was asleep.

In his dreams he watched an original presentation of the disappearance of blue slide rules. He must have slept a long time, because it was dark when he woke. Scarty had remembered to turn the lights on without his help.

"So you see," the voice droned on, "When I need the sensory data to back my findings on the theory of change, I simply call my cat. He has always remained the same shade of blue although I must admit that I sometimes have doubts that he will continue to do so. As he grows older I fear that he may be changing, too—changing to a blue grey."

Jasper banged his tail against the floor twelve times as the village clock struck twelve.

"We really must be leaving," the tall man, Jones the First, rose.

"We really must," Jones, the Second, echoed.

"Allow me to show you to the blue door." Jasper was glad they had taken his hint. He began using his politest purr.

"Impressive, Jones the First, murmured.

"Most impressive," Jones, the Second, echoed aloud.

After they had been gone about fifteen minutes Scarty turned the lamp down to pale turquoise so that he could relax with his studies. A flood of light receded slowly from the azure drapes.

"Most satisfying," Scarty breathed as he sank into the royal blue velvet chair which was his one vanity. His hand brushed over the folds of his gown and into the corners of his chair. He scratched his head absently as if trying to remember what to say next.

"My slide rule," he screamed suddenly. "Where is it, villains?" He ran around the room in mad circles from one corner to the next. Jasper knew he would get dizzy soon, so he decided he'd better calm him down before he fell down. He wound his tail around Scarty's ankle and tugged him back to the blue velvet chair. Jasper could be quite persuasive when he wanted to be.

"You don't mean to tell me that you think those gentlemen who just left might have taken it?" he sounded shocked at the prospect.

"Who was here—when—where?" Scarty fired.

"Jones."

"Oh. Jones was here?" He began drumming his fingers against his temple.

"Yes—Jones," Jasper emphasized the name hoping to impress it upon the philosopher's memory if he had one.

"I think it's very unfair of you to accuse him," Scarty stated in his most righteous voice. He paused, then added as if he were not at all confused by the issue, "You know, I think your charge might have possibilities."

Jasper had gotten used to the philosopher's backward way of thinking so he didn't bother questioning whose charge it had been.

"You think he's guilty?" Jasper whispered because it was getting more exciting now.

"Guilty," Scarty decreed.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'll wring his neck until he turns blue, that's what I'll do." Scarty spoke in decisive tones when it came to such important matters. "It is necessary that I have my slide rule. I must have it if I am ever to find what blueness is," he pouted. He settled down into his royal blue velvet chair again as Jasper left the room, waving his blue tail and leaving blue footprints behind him. When he reached the kitchen he scanned it carefully for signs of the slide rule. It wasn't there, so he ate the milk and bread Scarty

had left for his supper, then washed behind his ears and licked his paws before going back into the living room.

He scanned the living room too, and grinned so widely that his whiskers reached his ears when he saw that the slide rule was stuck behind Scarty's ear. As for Scarty, he had broadened his field of study Jasper saw—now he was muttering in his semi-conscious way to astrology books as he tried to plot the fate of Jones. He looked up at the clock and banged his tail on the floor three times, but Scarty didn't look up. Jasper yawned and walked away, determined not to keep the philosopher's crazy hours. After all, it had been a long day.

## *Frozen Ground*

*Margaret Gudejko, '63*

It's raining now. It should be a blossoming Spring rain, like last year, but the clouds lie close in an obscene embrace. I'd better close the window, Sue's picture's getting wet. All spotted with rain as if she had been crying. Funny, Sue crying. Sue couldn't cry if she wanted to. "Emotions are for children," she always said . . . if only she had cried, or laughed, or even belted me . . . just that wide-eyed expression . . . could mean "kiss me" or "you know I don't put cream in my coffee."

Think I'll call her . . . so easy. Just pick up the phone . . . like always. Why not? Cr 4-3986.

No, no good. The door's locked now . . . big, black . . . barred. I tried, God knows, I tried.

Raining, raining, all the time. I'd go out if it stopped, maybe. Been raining all afternoon . . . lousy rain . . . must be supper-time.

No, it's later.

I'd get a sandwich down at Tony's, or something. Ham and cheese, maybe, on dark. No caraway seeds in the bread, though. "Little black things," Sue called them.

God, I hate her. Joe said I would, at the party . . . which one was it? Tom's, maybe the birthday party he gave for his girl . . . oh, I don't know . . . what's the difference.

"You'll learn," he said, "You'll learn, Mike, and boy will you ever be sorry you wasted so much time with that one." Why didn't I listen then . . . to Joe and . . . who else? Somebody else said that . . . me maybe.

Funny, I remember that party so well . . . at Tom's . . . wicked crowded. Janie's twenty-first birthday, I think. Yes . . . big deal out of voting . . . and Sue with the cigar taking off a politician . . . she almost choked . . . so clear . . . new blue and purple sofa . . . Tom had done over the apartment. Sue took over . . . guided tour bit and all.

Everyone loved Sue . . . merry-go-round-love . . . Sue, the entertainer . . . everyone her friend, so they could say so . . . and me . . .

. . . hate her? No . . . no, Joe. I want to bury her . . . want to hate her . . . always laughing, joking, dancing with everyone . . . but it's different.

Why did she go home with Bill? "Teasing," she said, "just teasing, dear." Always teasing . . . flirting. But that's not it . . . if she were real . . . Jealous? . . . sure . . . but if I were real to her, if she had been real to me, if I could have known her . . .

It should have been raining the night I said it. The night I locked the door. It should have been a misty, bone-cold rain. But it was silver—a live, golden silver, like her

hair in the moonlight when we walked along the river. The river, flowing right, then left, circling, changeable . . . warm blue with white cloud caps in the breeze or graveyard grey, cold but not unreal . . . never unreal. I can stick my hand in, feel it swirling, dashing, know what it is, that it is. Never doubt the water or question.

Tired . . . not sleepy, though. Would be better to sleep again . . . no . . . better not. I'd see her sitting there in lit. class.

"Eyes are the windows of the soul"—whoever said that didn't know Sue . . . sparkling, soulless green eyes . . . distant as the pyramids . . . self-contained Cleopatra.

Why did I try? It was deep, indefinable, inexpressible. I pushed.

Fate, maybe . . . the swirling blackness that envelopes the future. It should fog the past, too . . . make it all disappear. *Now is.*

But I want to remember everything. I want to understand. I have to or the door will stay locked. Always alone, shut off, shut out . . . and Sue will be alone. And Sue will be alone. She'll fade back into nothing as if she never laughed, never lived. I must understand for Sue. . . .

That's a lie . . . a stupid lie. Even lie to myself. It's for me . . . all for me . . . the great ego . . . and because of me. If I had thought of her it wouldn't . . .

Someone's knocking again. Must be Joe. Doesn't he know the door's locked? It's no good, too late or maybe too early. Oh stop . . . stop . . .

"Stop."

"Let me in, Mike, you've got to."

"Go away, Joe. I'm busy."

"Mike, listen. Unlock the door. You can't stay shut up forever. Facts are hard to take, sure, but they're real. Mike, are you listening? Look, I know it was a godawful shock but . . ."

"Joe. Quit banging and get the hell out of here. I'll write you a letter or something."

"Mike, three days . . ."

Three days? Wonder what I've been doing? Sleeping? Maybe, maybe thinking . . . wishing. I must be hungry . . . did I eat? . . . no dishes around. It doesn't seem like three days. God no—it seems like always. I've been in this room with the door locked in front of me and behind me. Eternity . . . I always was, always will be and always

remain the same. That's when it began or earlier maybe. I'm here, smack in the middle of a bottomless eternity. If I could crawl out backwards . . .

"Will you stop banging on the door, Joe."

. . . if I could just get back . . . when Sue transferred from that girl's college in Connecticut . . . that first day in class. I'll close my eyes and wake up. Even the first night would be all right. Just to get back there. We should have gone some place else, though, Gustie's Lounge was too noisy. It must have been a Friday. Yeh, it was. I had swordfish for dinner—but I left it . . . afraid I'd be late. I should have remembered it then and gone some place else—too many people drowning in cha-chas. Sue was so serene, untouched by the noise. The match flared once when I lit her cigarette, almost burned her fingers, but she smiled, unfeelingly. I knew she felt things, though—if I had believed it.

Joe was wrong about her. He knows now. Everyone knows Sue now but they'll just shake their heads and go back to translating Virgil or peeling potatoes or something. I sing of arms and a hero.

. . . That first night. I felt as if I had never kissed a girl before. She leaned against the pillar on the porch of the dorm. Her hair just touched the neck of her green sweater. So small. I knew her then, that inexpressible part of her, so fragile, so much woman. I should have remembered all the rest of the nights—when Joe said she was taking me. . . .

. . . A ham and cheese and I'd walk along the river and look for her and tell her I was joking. But God, I wasn't—not really. Where was it? She said, "Mike, don't ever leave me alone. I'd . . . ." She didn't finish, just laughed. It was there by the river. We were walking along when she said it and then she laughed and said she was being silly. It was sunny. Things are silly in the sun sometimes, but they're real, facts in the dark. You can see more easily and not laugh at night.

She was even more beautiful in the sunshine . . . her hair . . . corn yellow, she called it . . . if I had said it in the daytime she would have laughed and not believed me and the sun would have darkened it all . . . blacked it out. But the night . . . the clean night when the soul is stripped and pretence rips into the hollowness.

Oh cut it out . . . dramatics, always dramatics. It happened . . . I did it . . . finished . . . and then I get poetic.

Why not? I'll write a poem on the eternal verities . . . on life . . . love . . . an epic. No, better, a treatise . . . a learned scholarly treatise for posterity . . . the ages . . . so they can see, understand.

Fool, Damned, stupid fool. Keep it up . . . don't see . . . step on her . . . step on her dead body.

"If that's the way you want it," she said. Calm. Poised . . . God, I wouldn't have said it if that's the way I wanted it. I would have waited . . . enjoyed it all . . . not caring . . . satisfied. But I had to know. Sue, I had to understand. "It's all over," I said, "I'm not going to see you anymore."

Was that the way I said it? . . . Yes . . . just like that. "I'm not going to see you anymore." What was I trying to prove? My importance? My great big almighty importance?

I wanted her to cry. I wanted to take her in my arms and comfort her and know she belonged to me. I would have held you Sue, and never let you be alone . . . but that wasn't all of it, was it? Not really. They were wrong . . . Joe was wrong, kind of wanted to show him, too . . . show him or me?

You could have laughed . . . would have known Joe was right . . . perfect score . . . but nothing. As if I had said I hated peanut butter . . . "If that's the way you want it" . . . nothing.

God, it's dark in here . . . must be night again. Another night . . . funny word . . . night, a night by any other . . . what's the matter with me? She's dead. Sue's dead. Believe it, Mike, it's real . . . the water . . . the bridge . . . Sue . . . the damn river. Joe said he saw her . . . saw the black river bury her.

Why?—Sue, why? You could have cried. You could have said, "Mike, I'm afraid of all of it, afraid of the whole rotten mess." I understand—fear. Fear of nothing. Fear of waking up alone in a concrete wilderness, fear of emptiness, of rooms full of people, full of everything, full of nothing.

I was afraid, too. Afraid Joe was right, afraid to believe in your silence, afraid to believe in myself, afraid to know, to admit what was real, afraid of them, afraid of it, afraid . . . afraid.

I should have said that to you. I should have admitted it. But I couldn't stand them laughing, teasing. They must know, they can see it. I could care. I listened to them, wrong, all wrong. How could I be so stupid? They're fools. I was too—listening, listening, straining to the wrong voice—outside—cheap talk. I should have listened then, inside. But I will, Sue. I do—it's so much clearer, easier, quiet.

It's dark . . . black all around. With my eyes closed I can see the black inside . . . the same black . . . the same quiet.

You understand now, Sue, don't you? I'm not afraid of it. I can see it and I can say it. I can see the truth, the reality and I can see your love. I can say I love you. I'm not afraid and I'll never leave you. You can tease all you want. I don't have to wonder, question anymore. Don't laugh, Sue—no, go ahead. Laugh, fling your hair back and laugh. I understand it all—your love, our love. We're really quite alike aren't we? It doesn't seem that way to everyone, but what do they know? Like Joe, he couldn't see our love and it was right there, warm and real, just like it is now.

Funny how happy I can feel now. It's quiet . . . no more ugliness, no emptiness, no fear. It's all so clean. See, the rain's even stopped—and there's a rainbow right across the sky. It's a symbol for us, Sue, a sign. And look—a full moon, Sue. It will be so beautiful, Sue. Just wait. I'll find Joe and we'll tell him. What a surprise, huh. He never did believe you loved me. I'll unlock the door and we can go out and take a walk in the moonlight. We can walk along the river and. . . .

"Joe, what are you sitting in the hallway for? Come on in."

"Are you all right? I've been sitting there waiting, hoping . . . are you sure you're all right?"

"Sure. Sure, I'm fine. Why so glum, buddy? Oh, come on, those aren't tears. A little jealous, maybe? I was telling Sue. . . ."

"Mike, Mike, for God's sake, you've got to face it. Sue's dead."

"Sit down. Want a sandwich or something—ham and cheese?"

"Mike!"

"Will you stop yelling. I can hear—I can hear everything. Listen, can you come over tonight? Sue and I are having a party. . . ."

"Mike, Sue is dead!"

". . . we're going to be married, you know."

# *The Scapegoat*

Joyce Hallisey, '63



He awoke at seven with a dry, hot taste in his mouth. The sunlight had already curved across the room to the foot of his bed and in another five minutes would have borne its white brilliance into the crucifix suspended above his head. It was Sunday and different from every other day. Today he couldn't simply pull on the jersey abandoned on the bedpost the night before; there would be no early slamming of screen doors. Nothing would be right until he had done one thing. He curled into a tight little ball.

His mother was up now, shuffling about rather aimlessly in her blue satin mules. She still hadn't gotten used to the idea of having to get up early to get him ready for Mass.

"Peter, please hurry. You can't be late."

He placed one foot testingly on the floor. Six days a week he somehow managed to put on a jersey and shorts by himself. But on Sunday his mother always felt obliged to pull his arms through his sleeves and to flatten his hair.

When she had finished they looked at one another, exhausted by the brief flurry of excitement. She smiled faintly and kissed his

dampened hair, savouring the clean-boy smell about him. She looked at him as though she would want to keep him this way, and the look made Peter uncomfortable.

"What would you like for breakfast?" They played the same game every Sunday morning now. She would make the magnanimous offer, and he would reply after hesitating long enough to cause concern,

"I'll just have a glass of juice for now. I haven't much time."

"All right, Peter, but you'll have to have something more substantial when you get back."

She hovered over him in the kitchen, feigning approval as he downed his orange juice.

"Do you have everything, Peter? Your beads? Your nickel?"

"Yes."

She seemed relieved and turned habitually to clear the one small glass from the table.

Peter went out the back way, carefully catching the door with his heel before it banged, because it was Sunday and because

his father was still asleep. As he turned out of the yard into the long lazy shade of the sidewalk, his stomach automatically tightened. Was it going to be like this every Sunday, he wondered? What was wrong? His mother had explained to him about God. He was clean and he had remembered not to scuff. He knew all the rules too—when to stand and when to kneel, and how to cross himself.

He had to admit this whole idea about church had cropped up almost over night. He had been out in the backyard one afternoon packing a dead lady bug into the dark soil under the lilac bush when his mother had called out shrilly to him,

"Peter!"

His father had turned from the bush he had been pruning. His brows had lowered ominously.

"Sounds like trouble, Pete. Better see what she wants."

Peter had plunked himself confidently onto the crackling wicker chair on the sunporch. He hadn't done anything wrong, at least nothing that his mother could have known about so soon.

His mother had sat opposite him, her hands cupped around her eyes, staring for a long time across the yard at his father. Then she had turned abruptly and had lit a cigarette. The smoke had streamed sharply from her nostrils as she began in the same breath,

"Peter, I want to talk to you about God."

Peter was still savouring delightful scraps of religion from that first talk. It had been decided that he would start Sunday school in the fall with Ellen next door. In the meantime he would start going to Mass on Sundays to sort of get in practice.

His father had been standing in the doorway as his mother was finishing. She had looked up and then across the yard as if she still expected to see him out there. His father had laughed leaning over the threshold.

"Feeding him the party line, Ann? It'll be a damned nuisance getting him up Sunday mornings. It's all yours if you want it that way."

"Well, I'm sure he wouldn't go at all if it were your responsibility!" She hadn't meant that. She had spoken too quickly. Peter had

watched her brief dark flush and then those white lines hardening around her mouth.

"But it isn't my responsibility—is it, Ann?" his father had added after a moment, smiling, waiting for her to smile back. His mother never could keep from smiling back when his father looked like that.

Peter remembered waiting as the lines around her mouth had gradually softened. She had smiled. Then they were all laughing together.

He was almost to the end of the street now. In a moment he would turn the corner and see the thin grey spire through the trees. He slowed down and wondered childishly for a moment. Did he see it or did it see him first?

He crossed the square quickly with his shadow trailing doggedly after him. Then he climbed the rough stone steps and stood, almost surprised that he had arrived so quickly, inside the door.

It was still early and the church was empty except for a few women kneeling half-hidden behind the pillars at the back. He slid into a pew near the door. The tightness was gone for the moment. It was always this way. He thought, love is here—and believed it. It was easy to feel in the fullness of the silence before Mass.

He had never been here with his mother. She had walked him almost to the door the first time he had come. For a moment he had thought she was going in with him. She had been wearing a tiny flowered hat. He knew the rule about hats. He strained his memory to try and recall if she had ever gone inside, but he didn't know.

He looked across the aisle through the half-opened windows at the waves of people beginning to stream across the parking lot. The old feeling was returning now, the tightness. Or was it more like a pain?

He pulled out his beads and began counting out Hail Marys slowly. The organ groaned and Peter started. The church was full now. The priest swept out of the sacristy and stood before the altar. Peter teetered giddily, standing a miraculous six inches taller with the help of the kneeler. The spectacle of the Mass flashed before him. He recognized all his cues and bobbed up and down with the others. He repeated all the prayers he knew and attempted reasonable facsimiles of the ones he didn't

know. The pain was still there but he was too busy just doing to pay much attention to it.

Almost an hour later he was picked up and carried along in the press of the crowd ebbing up the aisles of the church and emptying onto the square. He turned the corner onto his street and eyed himself critically for a moment in the drugstore window. He was still clean, and he was sure he hadn't left his beads behind him in the pew. But would that make it all right this time? Was that all she expected?

No, it was going to be like before. It was as though she had everything under control until he came through the door. She was sitting at the kitchen table, all dressed now, and her face was pink and blurred. She was looking at him in the same way she looked for dirt on his overalls.

He was the same . . . the pain . . . nothing you could see, it was there. Didn't she know he could go back again, do it another way, any way to make it right if that was what she wanted. If it meant just another rule, it would be easy. She looked down into her

empty coffee cup—releasing him. Then, there it was, that funny twist to her mouth.

"You'd better change now."

Peter looked down at himself. What was so funny? Was he the joke? He waited. She wasn't finished yet. His eyes felt hot and he blinked.

"Peter, don't make any noise. Remember, your father is still asleep." Hearing the warning every Sunday now, it came like the final rule.

He started obediently upstairs. Then something inside him locked. He thought of his father lying cocooned in the dark coolness of the bedroom. Rules—the air was sick with them. He turned and walked past his mother, starting another cup of coffee.

Slowly he opened the screen door as wide as he could and watched it slam. He heard the cup slip from his mother's hand and he could sense his father's first dull movements of consciousness. He settled back onto the dark loam under the lilac bush and hugged his knees. If he hadn't felt so relieved he would have cried.

## *The Balloon*

I want—  
the sky,  
    tacked, tented  
to lift on the end of a stick,  
to run with.

Meeting the faceless  
I want—  
    no face in a mirror.

A bob can be a nod.  
I want—  
    sleep . . .  
    upside down.

*Joyce Hallisey, '63*



# Overture in a Minor Key

Stand up and fall  
Through the blank pages of history.  
Squirm in the mire of Waterloo,  
Inhabit figged-temples of Egypt,  
Flee with the blazing Armada.  
Fight in blood-drenched arenas  
Watch the thumbs turn down.

Stand up and walk  
Through the forest of knowledge and defeat.  
Run meaningless through dimmed minds . . .  
Backward into nuclear war,  
Forward into bows and arrows.  
Swing over the Tigris and shout your being.

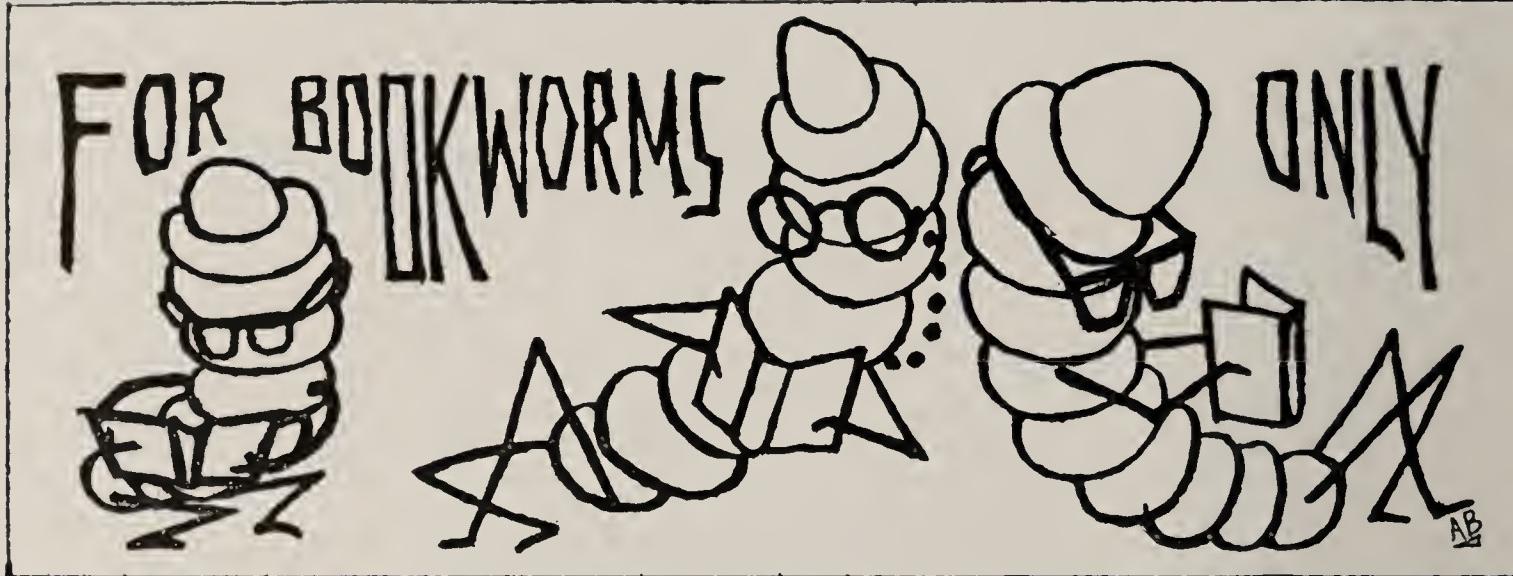
Stand up and speak  
With Antony and Nero.  
Cry the voice of Samson  
Screech with the pillar-trapped pagans.  
Sing—MY GOD, MY GOD—sin with Adam.  
Be silent, pillar of salt,  
Season the Ages.

Stand up and ride  
Through yellow air to Bunker Hill and Concord.  
Crack the bell or ring it.  
Fly moonward—empty space  
Bore into the earth,  
Dig bones from dirt or bury them.

Stand up and fight  
For freedom's cause or bonded slavery.  
Live together or isolate,  
Raise the sword of Good, fling it back to  
    swirling water.  
Damn the world, tear the earth  
Rend the temple's wall,  
Crumble it with heavy will.  
Battle God or Satan  
Hate Good—Hate Bad . . .  
HATE, LOVE, SWEAR, DAMN, SING, SHOUT . . .  
FIGHT, WIN, LOSE, PEACE, WAR . . .  
GOOD . . .  
    GOD . . .  
        NOTHING . . .  
            EVERYTHING

*But stay—crawl,  
Eat popcorn, sleep safely.  
Underground blackness, sun's light—pacify all.  
Nothing's right, nothing's wrong,  
All is webbed in evening . . .  
Calm.*

M. M. G.



**The Hazards of Holiness.** Brother Antoninus. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962.

The title of Brother Antoninus' recently published volume of poetry, *The Hazards of Holiness*, is a coup of understatement. The phrase calls to mind the discomforts of getting up early in the cold for Lenten Masses, of having to refrigerate a half-prepared meal on an Ember day, of enduring the tooth-pulling sensation of giving something up now and then. But in his "Foreword" Brother Antoninus explains that these poems "are all poems of that famous Dark Night of the Soul, which has become so commonplace in literary reference as to seem, by this time, triteness itself—except to those who undergo it."

He attempts, then, to make this particular spiritual state meaningful to those who have not actually experienced it by formulating it in his poems. As he states elsewhere, "I wanted everything here to evoke, call up and project, yes, cry out the Passion and Death of Our Lord Christ Jesus, King and Redeemer of men, that we might be called hourly to our own passion, that death of self, that redemption of the interior man, in the eternal crucifixion which is the life of man in God."

His "projections" and "crying out" are thoroughly unusual. Some of his poems are recreations of Bible stories: "Jacob and the Angel," "The Beheading of John the Baptist," "Judith and Holofernes," and "The Conversion of Saint Paul." The vividness of these tableaux

makes them seem to spring up around you: the dust of Jerusalem, the overpowering hotness of the desert road, the distant vision of Christian-infested Damascus, "Crash!"—the blinding miracle. It is as though you are there, and there with an insighted comprehension of the significance of the scene—with the poet's understanding.

The other poems, since they express the poet's feeling, belong to the poetic species "lyric." But to apply this work (which Webster defines, "suited to be sung to the lyre") to the tortured utterances that these poems are, seems most incongruous. They are pleasing insofar as they are excellent formulations of their subjects; but often they are not formulations of attractive or pleasurable things, and then it is a sort of trial to read them, to face these unpleasantries so starkly materialized, to contemplate them. To articulate his situations and states, the poet uses images of rape, dementia, annihilation. He expresses anguish, and to read his poetry is to suffer his anguish.

Most of these poems of the mortally devastating "Dark Night" have a certain unendurable *stasis* about them, a deathhouse stagnancy, of the gallingly, unacknowledged eternity of attention with which the holy man waits for God to touch him again, to alter the charring curse of this "Dark Night." These are the prayers of Job. These are the words of a man dying, begging annihilation from a removed, silent God. These are canticles of aridity, extended ejaculations of a hope bleak as despair. How far from the voice of the

minstrel, raised in song, is this unbearable sound of a man's voice breaking in agony, screaming into the deafness of night:

*God!*

*My first scream  
Skewers all night  
Far down  
Earth's groan,  
Gripe-gout,  
The mother-grunt,  
Gasps.*

Perhaps not the least beauty of such gruelling articulations is their power to make us groundling Christians aware that the "mount" of sanctity is a series of perpendicular, or rather, overimpending peaks. To attain or even truly to conceive these heights is beyond fallen man, save that God should by sheer omnipotence of grace drag upward His singular saint. Even then, in the ascent, the saint is lost to our view for his very transcendence of our limited vision; and when we beatify the saint, acknowledging his glory, we veil the sheerness of the miracle of grace. We think ourselves Franciscan if we cannot buy yet another piece of clothing, but Francis bore hunger and spittle and lice and lepers and men's ultimate laughing incomprehension of his ideal. It is an excellent shock therapy that in so immediate and nearly experiential a way as poetry we should recognize, realize, the strictures of sanctity, the *hell* of the way to heaven.

But the poems are not all grimness and agony. In "Saints" Brother Antoninus describes the Dark Night:

*A blankness  
Like neither night nor day  
Confronts: the flat void  
Of unrealization.*

*Before what will be  
Is.*

*Before what might be  
Can.*

*Like music you realize exists  
But never hear.  
Like terror you know alarms  
But do not fear.  
Like hope you know lives on  
But can't conceive.*

And some of the poems have other pre-occupations, for example the meditation "Jacob and the Angel." Though Brother Antoninus parallels Jacob's struggle with his own, the poet brings his character through his suffering to the joy and peace of resolution which the poet himself has yet to attain. "God Germed in Raw Granite," with a style and an exuberance supremely reminiscent of Gerard Manley Hopkins, expresses the characteristic thought of Brother Antoninus in images peculiarly his. There is a most enthusiastic "Canticle to the Great Mother of God," superb for its depths of reflective reverence; there is a profoundly real, "A Frost Lay White on California"; there is a splendid sort of final statement, "In Savage Wastes."

The whole volume is a unique, exciting experience. The meat of neither skeptics and infidels nor of the cautious, the moderate in all things, it will deepen and disquiet your thoughts. It is a strong book and compels a strong reaction: whether with it or from it, you will grow for the reading.

*Kathleen Marotta, '64*

Teilhard de Chardin, Pierre. **Letters from a Traveller.** Edited by Claude-Aragonnes. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962.

Teilhard de Chardin's recently published *Letters from a Traveller* is a record of the French Jesuit's journeys and geological work in China, Java, South Africa, India, and the United States, during the last thirty-two years of his life. More than that, it is a beautiful, powerful expression of the vitalization and verification, in Teilhard's own personality, of the thought which he has left, "the mark of a logical life, directed wholly toward the grand hopes of the world."

One of the most remarkable qualities of the *Letters*—a quality which seems to mark literature of any genuinely deep religious experience—is a kind of vital irregularity, the manifestation of a real spontaneity. The tension and passion of Teilhard's personality so clearly illumine his writing that the reader almost necessarily encounters them. To read the *Letters* is to be swept into the current of Teilhard's movement, to feel both his clear,

almost painfully exacting thought, and his soaring, expansive vision.

While the elaboration and explication of the "hominization" of the Universe—that process of deliberate evolution in which men become more human—are made gradually, and even cautiously, at first, Teilhard's actual arrival at the meaning of things, his response to the "single great problem of the One and the Manifold," is in every sense a "breaking-through." "The secret of the world," he writes, ". . . lies wherever we can discern the transparency of the Universe." Or, again, "It is the Other that I now seek, the Thing across the gap, the Thing on the other side."

It is possible to trace the development of Teilhard's thought through the *Letters*. In the earliest ones, he evidences dissatisfaction with the inadequacies of his geological work ("How much the exploration of the earth *in itself* fails to bring any light or point out any solution to the most fundamental questions of life.") and with "over-metaphysical" scholastic solutions to the problems concerning him. This initial dissatisfaction diverted Teilhard's consuming interest in the past, plunging him more and more deeply into the present and the future. The discipline of his science and the tremendous depth of his spirit brought a penetration which Teilhard might have called "mystical science," "the science of Christ running through all things."

William James tells us often that there is a real and deep melancholy which afflicts all men of reflection. And there is perhaps no more profound tension than that produced by the opposition of the spiritual and the rational. In the believing scientist, particularly, the opposition is a crucial and oppressive one. It is striking that the melancholy and grave tone of many of the *Letters* does not seem to be rooted in this basic conflict. Teilhard's vision is by no means a "tragic sense of life;" he has perceived a progress in the Universe, and his certainty of that development never wavers. His melancholy is not that of the rational man assenting to faith; it is that of the prophet whose words are rejected. When Teilhard writes of the "noosphere" (not unlike the Pauline "progress of the inner man"), he is full of grief at finding, on his journeys, "nothing but absence of thought," and civilizations "asleep—perhaps dead." With all this, though, there is more—much more—hope than melancholy

in Teilhard. His vision is vigorous and clear, and he is convinced that it is needed. For "what an absurd thing life is, looked at superficially; so absurd that you feel yourself forced back on a stubborn, desperate, faith in the reality and survival of the spirit."

The *Letters from a Traveller* are those of a great and holy man. They deserve to be read and loved.

Marie Ashe, '64

**The Other America.** Michael Harrington.  
New York: Macmillan Co., 1962.

Few people in the United States realize that "tens of millions of Americans are, at this very moment, maimed in body and spirit existing at levels beneath those necessary for human dignity."

Michael Harrington's *The Other America* describes the terrible poverty of vast numbers of unskilled workers, the aged, and the minority groups throughout our "affluent society." Not only does he report government statistics on the poor, but he also analyzes a situation wherein poverty is increasing each year in America; and he outlines a definite program to remedy the situation.

Mr. Harrington points to the invisibility of much U.S. poverty and presents his theory of a "culture of poverty." Today's poor, as he points out, are more often than not "off the beaten track." The slums are being forced closer and closer to the centers of cities, while middle-income groups push out into suburbia. Thus, the middle class housewife and her children cast but rare and distant glances at the misery of the poor. The commuting businessman streaks past the slums, perhaps, on the elevated train—but he is too engrossed in his newspaper to be much affected.

The rural poor, concentrated largely in the South, are also victims of isolation. Tourist routes avoid them; or worse still, they are in the midst of a surface scenic beauty that disguises their miserable way of life. The tourist sees the loveliness of the Appalachian spring or autumn, but never the long, barren winters in the hovels of the poor.

Harrington emphasizes the legislative as well as the material poverty of these people.

Medical, social security and minimum wage provisions are inadequate for their needs. America's middle class benefits continually, while lower-income groups become less able to help themselves.

This *Other America*, in its continuing growth, is socially dangerous. Technological advances and automation deprive more and more skilled workers of their functions in society, drawing them into the vicious circle of poverty. One of the psychological effects of poverty is evident in the unemployed man whose outlook on life becomes warped when he cannot support his family.

Socialist Harrington finds a solution to these problems in reform instituted on a federal level. The money and effort needed to clear up *The Other America* are not available to local or state institutions.

The first step in Harrington's reform program is destruction of pessimism and fatalism which flourish in poverty. The poor must be given roles in society and hope for a better mode of life. On the material side, they must be given proper medical care and adequate social security and minimum wage laws. In Harrington's opinion, expansion of presently-existing government organizations would effect such provisions.

A reader cannot readily dismiss this sociological study. Harrington wants his data to shock us for "until the facts shame us, until they stir us to action, *The Other America* will continue to exist . . . in the most advanced country in the world."

Teresa Bowes, '64

## Wheat Fields and Crows

*(from a painting by Vincent Van Gogh)*

I have put down life  
In pinned butterflies,  
Sat and watched it writhe.

But today what I touch  
(too sudden)  
Exhausts itself. The road snakes  
And fine scales pile at the side.

Crows I hadn't planned on  
Are coming now—  
Easily on the down wind of the storm.  
And the clear wheat,  
Balloon-yellow—  
Sallows.

Like dead fruit around me  
The air hangs heavy—  
then caves in.

Joyce Hallisey, '63

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*ethos*

Christmas  
1962



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## *Christmas*

## *Dimensions*

*This issue is a Christmas card—probably the most inclusive you will receive this season.*

*While the essence of Christmas is Christ, there are other smaller dimensions, varying in height and depth, that give sight, texture, taste, sound and smell to a time that is Christmas alone . . . the sight of new snow dropped white while you slept . . . the pine pricks . . . berry tastes . . . bells . . . carols . . . scratch of straw . . . candle smell . . . the crush of color, spangled, striped . . . all these extra-essential elements have become entwined in our Christmas.*

*In these sixteen pages we have tried to re-create as many dimensions of Christmas as we could . . . as a greeting from us to you for a wonderful and happy Christmas . . . and, by the way, happy New Year too.*

M.M.G.



*AND IT CAME TO PASS WHILE...*

Spiraling, speeding, delirious with impatient longing, so fast, fast, faster, faster . . . almost past stopping for the Love we had searched out, seeking in the wasting hunger of ages empty of light, . . . when it happened. (Perhaps it was, is, a wrong time? No . . . it could never be wrong, just not an obvious time. . . .) GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO, the hurry could only become more foolish, more bitter, more nothing, until nothing was everything.

So . . . subtly, softly, "according to the Word," decided from a time before all beginnings and accomplished in an assent so singular, so passionate as to be beyond imaginings and miracles, VERBUM CARO FACTUM EST. And in Him was the light to shatter the shadowed and famined valley of darkness and death. And in Him is life.

It was the silent, simple city that is to each succeeding generation blessed among men. And it was the wearied, humbled, eal-loused hearts of silent, simple people to whom it is given to stand as witness to the wonder of all wonderfuls. And they, (as perhaps we in our turn) feared exceedingly . . . until a hymn of grace filled their uncertain flesh. ET IN TERRA PAX, HOMINIBUS BONAE VOLUNTATIS.

A hundred-thousand generations of heaviness were lifted from their stooped shoulders, and their outstretched souls were flooded with the sacrament of joy that once begun, would never end, never, never . . . forever. And tired, darkened eyes were blinded with a brilliancy of understanding, and hardened, broken hands were gifted with a luxury of love. QUOTQUOT AUTEM RECEPERUNT EUM, DEDIT EIS POTESTATEM FILIOS DEI FIERI.

" . . . and the world knows Him not." EMMANUEL!

*Mary F. Courtney, '63*

# The Ballad of Sir Hubert Cupcake

Sir Hubert Cupeake, a model "A" knight  
Went "prieking the plain" on a Christmas Eve night  
To wish all his neighbors holiday cheer  
And bearing "Four Roses" for a Happy New Year.

Journeying the hillsides, he waved to a throng  
Of lovely young damsels, but the wind was so strong  
He turned homeward his horse, Alfred by name,  
A great, ebon stallion with a wreath for a mane.

Later that evening—in front of the fire  
Sir Hubert lay lolling, playing his lyre,  
When a stranger burst in, a GIGANTIC GREEN KNIGHT  
Giving brave Sir Hubert a quivering fright.

"I say, who are you?" Sir Hubert sensed danger  
As he stared at the axe brought by the stranger.  
"I'm ealled the Green Knight." And truly 'twas fitting  
Thought Cupeake, our hero, from where he was sitting.

For the man was indeed a deep shade of green  
With glinting green eyes and a right haughty mien.  
As he loomed over Cupcake a tense tale he told  
"It's hard for a knight . . . competition takes hold."

He further expounded, "I've one small request—"  
At this point Sir Hugh grew a trifle distressed.  
"If you don't mind, would you please take this axe  
And give my green neck a couple of whaeks."

Though Hubert was willing, before he could latch  
(Onto the axe) he thought, "There must be a catch."  
Sir Hubert was right, soon the import he learns:  
"You have three blows, then I'll have my turns."

Now Hubert was brave and a dutiful wight,  
But losing his head was a bit of a plight.  
"No matter to me, Sir," explained the Green Knight,  
"I simply can't sleep till I've won me a fight.

"Each year in this season I sit and I fume,  
Oppressed and entombed in my castle-type room.  
I try oh, so hard, to be part of the group—  
But since I'm so green . . ." his head started to droop.

"And now when it's Christmas or nearly New Year's—" He said no more then, for he burst into tears.  
"Now, now there, Green Knight—" Sir Hubert felt sad  
For he thought that the evil one wasn't so bad.

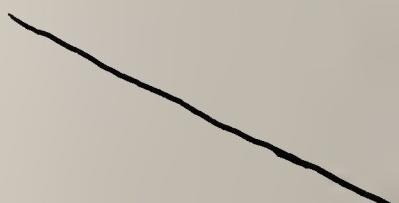
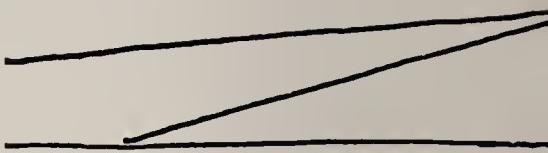
He brought out plum pudding and tea in a tin;  
The Green Knight responded with a great big green grin.  
The sand was long gone from the clock on the shelf  
When the Green Knight stopped drinking and picked up himself.

He hopped on his horse: o'er the hillside he sped—  
(Sir Hubert could finally settle in bed)  
But the Green Knight exclaimed 'ere he rode out of sight  
"Merry Christmas to you—but I'd still like a fight."

# INFINITUM

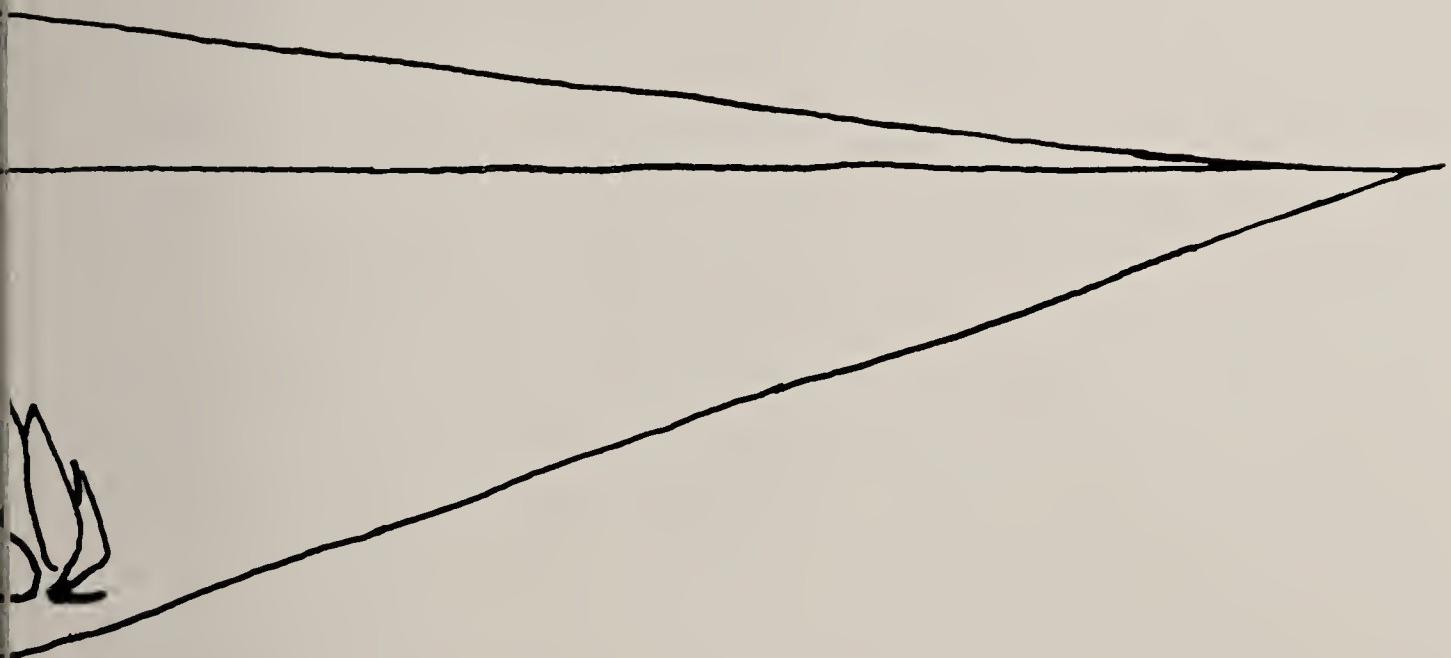
Rosemary Connors, '63

Stay—the night is cold.  
Frost white-tips the fields  
And winter winds strain their frozen bonds.  
Here—creep closer closer to the fire,  
Cradled deep within the hollow  
From the winds.  
I guard it well.  
The shepherds come and curse the cold.  
They gather nightly to warm  
Their stiffened hands before its flame.  
Stay—your staff lies idle  
On the frozen ground.  
Your hands chaff against  
The earthen cup.  
Night winds only greet  
Your fancied pleasure.  
Stay—till morning comes and  
Wheat gold strands of sun  
Lighten your path.



Old mother—look—there  
The blackness fades to blue.  
It burns the sky—spilling  
Over onto earth.  
Rest? Yes—for a moment  
My legs weary of this star-  
Worn path.  
That staff—my father carved  
When I was just a

Child.  
He blessed it when I left  
To work in another's field.  
It serves me well. Tonight  
The hills rise beneath my feet  
Strewn with stones and unfamiliar  
Turns.  
Ah! The fire warms my hands.  
The cold sets deep.



Stay—the morning serves  
Your cause in time.  
The night winds blow  
Too strong.

The star rises, still—see  
There—the lone one in the sky.  
I must go.  
Till morning comes  
Guard well your flame.  
The night is chill.



# A TIME FOR BELLS

*Kathleen E. Powers, '63*

This was the sixty-eighth year that Felipe had rung the bells of the Old Mesilla Mission Church. Now he was an old man and the little town had grown old with him, but no one noticed his slightly stooped shoulders and stiffened walk. To the people of the town he was part of their church—only Pedro and the young Padre Rodriguez noticed that the bells rang more slowly now.

Cold winds whipped from the north against him as he walked home from morning mass. He wondered if there would be snow next week in time for Christmas. Shivering, he pulled his striped serape up on his shoulders and tugged at his sombrero until it came down over his forehead and kept his straggling hair from blowing in his eyes. It is nearly the end of December, he thought;

another year slipped by making room for younger men.

As he turned the corner he saw Juan Chavez coming toward him down the narrow street.

"Buenos dias, Señor," Juan raised his hat. People always raised their hats when they said hello to Felipe.

"How are you?" Felipe asked.

"Not good, not good," Juan shook his dark head. "Last Christmas I could not get many toys for my children because business was so bad—I couldn't even buy a present for my Maria!"

"But things are better now, no?" Felipe asked quietly.

"Worse, much worse," Juan searched for words. "This morning when I went to my

shop the lock on the door was broken—torn apart! I went in to check my blue box where I kept my money but I could not even find the box."

"That is bad," the old man's eyes sympathized.

"My children, they will be so unhappy Senor," Juan shook his head again as he walked away.

Felipe could feel through his thin shoes the end of the pavement and the beginning of a frozen dirt road. There were times when he would not have noticed how it pained his feet, he recalled. There were times too, when poor men like Juan Chavez wouldn't have to worry that any one in the little town would steal from them.

"Steal," Felipe muttered and the word rang hard against his ears. He looked about him at the scattering of solid, flat-roofed adobe houses with their neat little dirt yards. Why the people of Juarez wouldn't even consider this a town! There were only a few hundred people and many of them were of the same families—it was more like a neighborhood . . . when you couldn't trust your own people, things were bad. Juan was a good man and everyone knew he was poor.

"Only a few steps further," he told himself as he turned toward the plain adobe house with the low wall. Pedro would be waiting for him. Pedro was not old enough to run his own life, Felipe told himself again today, and his shoulders sagged. If only the boy could have been brought up by his mama and papa! Perhaps it was the bells that had made his own boyhood so different; they gave a dignity which one could not betray. Pedro would be a good boy, he felt sure; but now he was too old to be taken by the hand and led from danger.

"Hello, old one," Pedro's reddened face and black tousled hair greeted him as he entered the dark room.

"Good morning." Felipe wondered if the hair was windblown. "Have you been for a walk?"

"At this hour?" I just got up." Pedro's voice sounded harsh.

"Did you work late yesterday?"

"No."

"You got home late last night." The old man noticed a familiar odor about Pedro.

"What of it?" Pedro asked curtly.

"Where were you?" the old man persisted.

"What difference does it make?" Pedro's voice was sharper now and Felipe could see that his eyes were blurry. It didn't do any good to talk to him when he was in this condition.

Pedro didn't intend to talk either. At least not to the old man. Grabbing his deerskin jaeket he rushed out of the house letting the door bang shut behind him. "I can't get out of here quiet enough," he said, although he wasn't sure there was anyone to hear him. "He drives me out of my mind. Why doesn't everyone else see through him?" Pedro lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply. He began walking toward the plaza in the center of the town.

"Your Grandfather is a wonderful old man," he remembered the young padre saying, "his ways are so simple." That was almost it, he thought. His ways were old and his ideas older. He was simple all right, too—he could barely read. Padre Rodriguez was educated. He knew how to get things done. He could get more money from the people than the old padre ever had, and for that Pedro admired him—he could get money without even working! But why he had said that Felipe was wonderful Pedro couldn't see unless, possibly, the priest believed in humoring the old man.

Padre Rodriguez told people what to do. He didn't have any grandfather telling him what to do or trying to choose his friends for him. The padre wouldn't have stopped hanging around with his friends just because the old man told him to. They were really good kids, Pedro thought; it was too bad that the police in Juarez had taken a few of their jokes seriously. And his Grandfather! He couldn't understand even when Pedro told him that they were only fooling around.

He could see the naked trees in the plaza now and the empty December ground. In the center stood the bandstand, its cold cement lines revealing the care with which his Grandfather had planned it and built it many years before. Around the sides of it were a few warped benches and on one of these Pedro saw two of his friends. Their collars were turned up high and they sat with their legs sprawled out in front of them as they watched the people going to the shops. Pedro's last cigarette was gone; he wondered if they had any more. We should plan some fun for tonight, he thought. I'll



ask them to go to Juarez. They bought my drinks last night so tonight I'll buy for both of them. He wondered what his Grandfather would think of that. Sometime he would get even with the old man for ordering him around.

During the next few days as each family gathered the candies and little gifts that would fill the donkey-shaped pinatas, the town looked forward to Christmas with the wonder of its children. The winds blew colder and the old ones knew that it would be a hard winter later, after the pinatas were broken, but now was no time to think of that. Two days before Christmas the grey clouds that had settled behind the mountain rolled and gathered with the high wind and hovered over old Mesilla. The sky darkened and the snow whipped down.

It was a great improvement this snow, Felipe decided. In the morning when he left church after setting up the manger, sunlight and ice on the bare trees reminded him of the chandelier he had seen once in one of the padre's pictures. No one else in the town had ever seen such a wonder. The houses were little white boxes and everything glittered. Even the desert was sheeted in snow and sparse cactus stood out in amazement. The only sign of reality, he noticed as he walked, were fresh wagon wheel ruts on the road near his home.

After breakfast he would make the house as clean inside as it was outside. He sat down at the wooden table and began to eat. It was the same breakfast as always: pinto beans with chili and salt which he ate from the clay plate with its red and green painted designs, black coffee from a heavy mug. His cat circled around his leg and the table leg, looking up at him with questioning eyes. He put the plate on the floor and the cat walked over and ate what was left. He smiled when it came back and again circled the table leg and then his leg, purring as it brushed its back against his thin ankle. "Foolish cat," he said softly but the term was more endearment than reproach. He thought that the cat must know this because he purred again as he walked into Pedro's room where he could curl up and pass the day in lazy silence. Felipe followed the cat into the room. It would take him a couple of hours to clean it he knew. The bed was unmade and some torn paperback books lay

on the floor. On the table the ash tray was overflowing. There were some shirts on the floor and Felipe could see that one of them was fresh. He stooped carefully—when he did it slowly it didn't hurt. The drawer rasped when he opened it and he saw what was making it stick. It was a small box, blue and chipped. While his head told him no, something hard and difficult to swallow swelled within his throat. His eyes grew hot and moist as he took the box and the cat, leaving the room as he had found it.

Pedro had been out working on a new job that day but Felipe heard him at the door. The night before Pedro had been in Juarez and Felipe hesitated before asking him about the box.

"You're home early."

"Tomorrow is Christmas."

"Is that why they let you out early?"

"What do you think?"

There was no way of getting him into a civil conversation; Felipe could see that he must be direct. Pedro stood in front of him and his face was a hollow grin. For a moment, Felipe felt afraid. Not of Pedro himself—he was only a boy—but of something within him.

"Where did you get the box?"

"Can't I even have a box if I want it?" Pedro leered. "Leave me alone or you'll see what I can have."

"Where did you get it?"

"All right, all right, I got it in Juarez," Pedro replied impatiently.

There was a sound of knocking at the door. Felipe hurried his steps across the floor hoping that the visitor had not heard his Grandson speaking disrespectfully. He blessed himself as he opened the door.

"Buenos tardes, Padre."

"Good afternoon, Felipe," Padre Rodriguez replied.

"How is your flock?" he asked, trying to keep his voice light.

"I've just come from Juan Chavez's house—you probably heard that some money disappeared from his shop last week—so I gave him a few things for the children."

"Oh, hello Pedro," the Padre had not noticed the young man who had entered the dark room. Felipe squirmed as his grandson smiled.

The priest turned to Felipe. "Pedro must be a big help to you. He's really a man now

—and of course you can't do everything you used to."

"That's right, Grandfather is old, but I help him."

Pedro smiled again.

The Padre looked at Felipe's withered hands and thin wrists. There was an uncomfortable silence, then he began to talk about the problems of the parish, glancing occasionally at Pedro's strong brown form. His monologue was working toward abstract spirituality when he again paused uncomfortably.

"Yes, he does look very strong," Felipe answered the Padre's question.

"As a matter of fact, that's what I came to see you about," the priest looked at his own large feet and then out the window. "I know that it is a great honor to have rung the bells ever since they came to Old Mesilla—it wouldn't be the same without you, but Pedro is getting older now. . . ."

The old man was bewildered. "Without you"—he could not see what the Padre was going to do but fear rose within him.

"But Padre, my bells . . ." his voice was scarcely above a whisper.

"Felipe, I feel I must command you for your own good; do not ring them any more."

"But tonight, midnight . . ." the old man's eyes were wet.

"Don't you realize that this is a younger man's job? It is too strenuous for you," the priest sounded as though he were scolding a child.

Felipe would obey him—he knew he would obey him. There was no question about that in his mind—but it sounded hard.

"It's not as if you were giving up the bells to a stranger," the padre tried to console him. "Pedro is your own grandson."

"Padre Rodriguez, tonight is Midnight Mass," Felipe forced calmness on a quavering voice. "I want . . ."

"All right, all right, I must leave now." The priest's tone had become businesslike.

"Goodbye Padre," Pedro smiled as he rushed to open the door for the priest.

Felipe sat near the door and watched the Padre's step, quick and heavy on the frozen road. He was still sitting there as the shadows from the mountain lengthened and disappeared; then he rose with difficulty. Setting his serape high on his shoulders, he opened the door on a star-filled night. The

wind had died out but the cold air was sharper and it burned his face. Felipe thought the walk had never seemed longer. There were a few times when he didn't see the frozen ruts and he stepped halfway into them. They were too narrow for his whole shoe—he lurched to the side and almost fell.

He knew he was old. The Padre was right—he must give up his bells. But he wouldn't think of that now. Tonight, his sixty-eighth Midnight Mass he would ring them again. He really should be thanking God for giving him as much time as He had.

But Pedro—he didn't have any great reverence for the bells. And the same hand that had stolen from a poor man, was the hand that would ring bells which turned the mind toward God!

The old man had been praying for a long time when he heard the noise; it was a footstep so soft that for a moment he almost wasn't sure it was there. But then the floor creaked and he knew. It could be the Padre he thought, but inside he knew it wasn't.

He hobbled back to the stairs. The faster he tried to go the slower he seemed. Walking had become so painful lately that he really shouldn't think of hurrying. He was breathing hard and his legs ached as he began to climb. Up, up. . . . Up, up. . . .

From the yellowed window at the landing he could see a hundred lights streaking the deep black that was the road outside. The candles flickered and some of them died; the wind was so strong that the villagers were having difficulty keeping them lighted as they walked to church. He could hear an occasional shout and laughter as candles were blown out. Entering the church the first of the villagers held the door for a moment and the blast of wind brought icy pain to Felipe's shoulder.

But there was no time to lose. Three more steps, then three more. . . . In the darkness above him he could make out the lighter form of Pedro. His eyes wouldn't plead with his Grandson—that couldn't help him. Pedro tensed; his black eyes defied the old man as his hand reached high on the rope. Felipe was silent as he saw it pause for a moment, and then the rope began to move. He heard a world crash rhythmically behind it. He bowed his head as the bells tolled for midnight. Finished old man, they shouted, everything finished, everything over . . . over.



The bowl's empty still.  
They pass me  
Hands pushed deep in their pockets.

One cold thought sticks.  
Pencils move faster.  
It's hard . . . off-season.

J. E. H.



In eye-wide puddles  
Tallow falls—  
Drops  
Him.

Christ chrysalis  
Singed.  
Promising small moth warmth  
Light ate Him in.

J. E. H.



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# The Search for Synthesis in Modern Drama

Claire Larracey, '63

An era of critical redefinition of values and the means to implement and incorporate them as a vital, integral part of the changing human situation, is reflected thematically and structurally in modern drama. Contemporary theatre portrays a search for synthesis between the apparently existing polarities of human existence. The need for individuals to adapt meaningfully to current exigencies necessarily involves a search for the true, universally meaningful values in the transient, seemingly irreconcilable opposites compounded in any period of transition and change. Thus, claims of a lack of values in contemporary society can be countered by the thesis that values are always at least implicitly present but that change is occurring at the levels at which they are traditionally actualized.

Significantly in modern drama, we note a striking recurrence of the theme of a search for a frame of reference which will allow the individual to derive and maintain an ordered, pervasive set of values worthy of a total commitment of the self, which provides an intelligible synthesis of the apparent oppositions in temporal experience. The dramatist embodies this theme in one or more individuals seeking a mode of synthesis which will satisfy a universal desire for a meaningful interior life. To offset the fragmentized, transitory, and often illusory components of the existential experience, these individuals strive to reconcile the permanent and the transient; the ideal and the real; the individual and the social; and the spiritual and the material. To illustrate the modern dramatist's search for synthesis I will focus on the works of four playwrights, viz., Luigi Pirandello, exponent of the French theatre of the absurd; Henrik Ibsen, founder of modern drama; the Russian dramatist, Anton Chekhov; and the profoundly spiritual French artist, Paul Claudel, in whom I find the culmination and fulfillment of this search.

Luigi Pirandello, in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, has presented one of the most poignantly effective illustrations of the theme of existential disillusion and search. His highly innovative techniques, coalescing to reinforce his utilization of the play-within-a-play device, emphasize his meaning and assure him of consideration as a profound artist. The theme of divergent epistemologies and inherent complications in the search for a basis of convergence, constitutes the essence of this play: "Each one of us has within him a whole world of things, each man of us his own special world. And how can we ever come to an understanding if I put in the words I utter the sense and value of things as I see them; while you who listen to me must inevitably translate them according to the conception of things each one of you has within himself. We think we understand each other but we never really do," asserts a leading character. This statement succinctly expresses the breadth and complexity of the problem.

Pirandello was markedly impressed by the implications arising from the necessary presentation of a series of social masks in the course of human interaction, a phenomenon traceable to lack of shared meanings among societal members. In behavior which is in direct contradiction to the concept of individual integrity, individuals adapt to the un-integrated fluidity of transitory situations by presenting a constantly changing self, one's social mask. The title itself, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, provides the major clue to this theme: an author is not available to depict the interrelations of these six people because no one has a valid synthesizing vision capable of truthfully portraying his story. Thus, Pirandello shows that dramatic presentations inevitably, because of this inherent impossibility, always sacrifice individual integrity in the compromising attempt to harmonize the uniqueness of the reality peculiar to each person. Ironically, the dramatist is

unwilling to portray the incongruity arising from the divergence of epistemologies in the interests of realism, when in fact this incongruity is the most real fact of human existence.

Pirandello feels it is the responsibility of the playwright to transcend particular experience for a vision of the latent truth inherent in it. This is brought out in the important dialogue involving the stage manager, who embodies the conventionalism of the theatre which Pirandello is satirizing. It is evident, too, in the speech of the antagonist father who says: "When the characters are really alive before their author, the latter does nothing but follow them in their action, their words, in the situations which they suggest to him; and he has to will them the way they will themselves. . . . When a character is born, he acquires at once such an independence, even of his own author, that he can be imagined by everybody even in many other situations where the author never dreamed of placing him; and so he acquires for himself a meaning which the author never thought of giving him."

The problem of whether the interior life or the social life is the source of reality is not answered by *Six Characters in Search of an Author* for it fails to present the two as complementary, perceiving them rather as diametrically opposed and mutually destructive. No significant attempt is made by the characters to seek any basis for communication which will lead them to the realization that in other people one can find major sources of the meaningfulness and value of the individual life. Thus Pirandello's play reinforces the concept of life as being unintelligible and transient. The possibility of abstracting universal elements and hence, meaningful synthesis, cannot be discerned in *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.

In Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, we find one of the most interesting and tragic searches for a reconciliation between the idealism of the individual and the realism of the collective individuality, society, wherein the tenability of idealistic commitments, quantitatively considered, seems destroyed. Though Hedda is a character whose response to disillusionment is most difficult to sympathize with, it is nevertheless possible to discern reasons for her obsession with shattered idealism, her inability to perceive anything in social reality

that is worthy of even superficial commitment. She apparently deems her callous, opportunistic, deceitful attitude as perfectly congruous with her conception of what is due society in terms of what it has ever offered her. It has failed to provide any satisfying, constructive channels for the direction of her rebellious, restless, idealistic spirit. She has, in the course of time, developed a stylized set of automatic responses for all the conventionality she encounters and she is thus unable to construct any meaning and depth from normal inter-personal relations. The Hedda whom we meet in Ibsen's play is fundamentally psychologically disturbed. For her, defense mechanisms are now functioning to the point that reality is not being perceived as it is, but rather, in terms of her automatic, stylized preconceptions. The task of evaluating Hedda becomes one of discerning her true personality which is masked by defense mechanisms. The clue to this personality lies in her obsessive dedication to the ideals of freedom, courage and spontaneous beauty. To have these ideals is not to be fundamentally callous and insensitive. Her failure as a mature integral person arises from her inability to transcend other individuals' failures to live up to her idealistic evaluation-frame. She consequently concludes that the world and its members are not worthy of the slightest exposure of her true self.

This frame of mind inevitably leads to her loss of self-knowledge. To compensate for failure to implement her own ideals during her life, Hedda tries to embody them all in her death act. This reveals her latent and fervent hope that possibly there is a "deed worth doing," that the "one right thing" is still possible. Perhaps this act could in part compensate for that which was the source of her obsessive concern: inability to implement her own values. Here is the essence of Hedda Gabler's tragedy. Endowed with rare gifts of the spirit, she utilizes them for destructive rather than constructive ends. She could not perceive in human life the potential to give and thence derive meaning from the communication of her sensitive idealism which contained such rich possibilities for synthesizing and spiritualizing the material offered by earthly interaction and existence.

Anton Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* is a logical prelude to analysis of Paul Claudel's

dramatic work. *The Cherry Orchard* embodies the struggle between traditional and emerging values. Both new and old offer potential for good when synthesized and integrated. In the transitional period depicted, the characters are in a state of undefined identity and direction. In the midst of these people who are searching for meaning in their existence either through an uncritical desperate clinging to the past or by intense belief in nature as the ordering principle of reality, is the poet Trofimov, who is able to see in all things the progress and perfection of man when he freely and willingly accepts what is, and modifies and directs it toward good. He is able to discern the universal and consequently the meaningful, in the transitory particularities of human experience. In the dichotomy between the ideal and the real, he sees the opportunity for man to use his greatest powers. When he perceives the desperate clinging to the orchard merely because of its association with past memories, he advocates relinquishing it, breaking with the past because, in this instance, attachment to it is thwarting a form of industrial progress which will enrich human life and alleviate some of its suffering. The synthesizing value depicted in this drama is a humanistic one, a concept which is built upon and extended in Paul Claudel's verse drama.

Claudel, in *The Tidings Brought to Mary*, injects the Christian concept of grace into secular humanism. He builds upon the framework of the Incarnation and the logical fulfillment of its integrated beauty in man's Redemptive mission, in his loving, free acknowledgement that "all things that He has created are in communion, all have need of one another." This drama can be interpreted as a significant attempt to integrate Catholic doctrine with the highly compatible, but often relatively neglected, aspects of the protestant Ethic and its directive, to remake the world in the image of God in the interests of both personal salvation and exaltation of God. Claudel implies that the world contains the forces for the spiritualization and exaltation of matter, for the implementation of meaningful Christian ideals. In this context, Claudel emphasizes man's free will, the joyful experience of choosing God freely both in response to the intrinsic goodness of God and in the interests of human fulfillment in the Christian tradition. Claudel dramatizes

the way to the fatherhood of God via active participation in the brotherhood of man and the actualization of belief in the "Christian commonwealth, without servile fear, . . . each should have his right, according to justice, in marvelous diversity, that Charity may be fulfilled."

Claudel's artistry is impressively evident in his thorough integration of poetic expression with the consistent presentation and development of his ideas of order, justice, submission, beauty, and harmony, which give philosophical as well as artistic reinforcement to his total work. The main theme of man's active participation in the Redemptive act is underscored in reference to the Cross. ". . . which draws everything to itself. . . . The heritage of all, the interior boundary stone that can never be uprooted, the centre and navel of the earth by which all humanity is held together." Pierre de Caron is the concretization of the belief in work as a form of prayer. In Claudel's opinion, there are many paths to God and man must explicitly choose one of them, for the nature of an integrated pursuit and grasp of truth is such that "one may not say that he believes in truth, but rather that it grows within him, having found nourishment."

Anne Vecours, is the most majestic figure of the drama. He is the essence of the Christian spirit of charity: a loving sharing of his lot with others, in the interests of justice, love, order, and God's glory. He constitutes Claudel's most brilliant embodiment of belief in the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption as they are impressed on men and expressed by them in their relations with their fellowmen.

The conception of hierarchical spiritual value is most effectively portrayed in the presentation of the leper, Violaine. Claudel shows how the spiritual values in human life are not only retained but in fact enriched although the flesh is being destroyed. Glowing faith in the potential of man as he lovingly and freely gives himself, in the Spirit of Christ to other men and to the will of God, are the source of some of the most beautiful poetic passages in the drama. Claudel shows that the Redemption of man via the Church's revitalization and simultaneous return to its integral simplicity is attainable through the unfathomable powerful gift of Grace, a theme which is reinforced by the consistent back-

drop of the Angelus. Perhaps the most beautiful summary of Claudel's thought can be found in the passage:

*And certainly Justice is beautiful. But how much more beautiful  
Is this fruitful tree of mankind, which the seed of  
the Eucharist engenders and makes grow.  
This too makes one complete, whole unified.*

Thus, justice gives way to charity, the greatest of all the virtues.

We find in Claudel's masterpiece, a fulfillment of the modern dramatists' search for synthesis. In all the previously treated dramas, the failure to arrive at this richest of all possible meanings of life constitutes the tragic overtone. By contrast, the very beauty and majesty of *The Tidings Brought to Mary*, consists in its manifestation of artistic, philosophical and theological integration.



## *Les Mouches: The Existential Way of Freedom*

*Mary Courtney, '63*

*And I—who do you think I am? I, too, have my image, and do you suppose it doesn't fill me with confusion? For a hundred thousand years I have been dancing a slow, dark ritual dance before men's eyes. Their eyes are so intent on me that they forget to look into themselves. If I forgot myself for a single moment, if I let their eyes turn away—*

*So long as there are men on earth, I am doomed to go on dancing before them.*

*Zeus, II, ii*

Ambiguity, anguish, brutal finality and Sartre's peculiar "bad faith" saturate this piece of conversation from his early drama, *Les Mouches*, (*The Flies*). This is a representative citation from the drama, I feel, and it gives an indication of the tone, content and inspiration that give the play its meaning.

The whole play is a fair introduction to Sartrean thought, which at this date is conveniently labelled "existentialism." Although I am loathe to slight the play as drama I feel that it is of primary importance to be sensitive to the philosophical and ethical implications of the dramatic action that define Sartre's man

and his reality. Indeed, it is very difficult, and if we were to follow the general dicta of Sartre himself, undesirable, to discuss and evaluate the plot, the action, the characters, etc. . . . of a Sartrean work in the comparative light of other actions, other characters. Man makes himself by his actions, says Sartre, and hence it follows that every action of every individual is as unique as a work of art. It is not to be defined by some other action of some other individual. Thus, I feel that it will be most profitable to begin by considering Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophical position regarding man and man's relation to his world as revealed in *Les Mouches*.

Sartre's existentialism defines ambiguity as the root of man's existence: "to exist is to happen without reason." It is possible to say of human reality that, in each individual case, IT IS, but it is not possible to say WHAT IT IS. Orestes, in *Les Mouches*, does not dwell on describing the human condition as Antoine Roquentin in Sartre's novel, *La Nausée*, does: "The world absurdity is coming to life under my pen; absurdity was not an idea in my head, or the sound of a voice, only this long serpent dead at my feet. And without formulating anything clearly, I understood that I had found the key to Existence, the key to my Nausea, to my own life. In fact, all that I could grasp beyond that returns to this fundamental absurdity." Orestes comes upon it in a moment of self-intuition, "What emptiness! What endless emptiness, as far as eye can reach!" There is no possible dialogue between man and his posited existence, hence after his acceptance of absurdity as a fact (but not as a norm), Orestes strives to give himself an essence from within himself through an ethical statement since it is not given by any universal order. Even though Sartre emphasizes the preeminence of the individual, he realizes that human reality includes not only our subjectivity but also ourselves as objects existing, and it is through the other person that we are faced with the necessity of passing judgment upon ourselves. Orestes, in order to belong to the country of his birth, to be accepted by the people of Argos, "for memories are luxuries reserved for people who own houses, cattle, fields, and servants," must assume roles which others have posited for him by their expectations. He must have a status in order to act.

In an effort to describe the fundamental

irreducible that is man, Sartre naturally comes face to face with a concept that is now so traditional that He feels that it reflects permanent and basic aspects of the human condition, that is the concept of God. He completely rejects a Christian concept of God. For him, consciousness acts by negation and to be conscious is to be aware of nothingness. God would be complete consciousness. A union of being with lack of being is absurd and impossible. The infantile dependence upon an anthropomorphic picture of God prevents man from realizing his ability to deal directly with the realities that face him. In *Les Mouches*, Zeus is the ally of a tyrant who fears the freedom of his subjects and turns their interest away from the facts of their existence to mythological duties that are reinforced by conditioned guilt projections. And at the same time Zeus' one gnawing, secret fear is that Orestes knows that he is free, free to choose his own actions. He confides to Aegisthus: "Once freedom lights its beacon in man's heart, the gods are powerless against him. It's a matter between man and man, and it is for other men, and for them only, to let him go his gait, or to throttle him." Religion, for Sartre, is a form of "bad faith" which the authentic individual cannot espouse. It is a form of escapism from the reality of the absurd.

This notion of freedom is basic to Sartre's concept that human action creates an essence for the individual. He says that freedom of action is that irreducible which distinguishes man from the rest of the world. The nobility of Orestes comes through poignantly in his acceptance of the consequences of freedom: "I have done *my* deed, Electra, the heavier it is to carry, the more pleased I'll be; for that burden is my freedom. Only yesterday I walked the earth haphazard; thousands of roads I tramped that brought me nowhere, for they were other men's roads. Today I have one path only, and heaven knows where it leads. But it is *my* path." The falsely spiritual tutor counsels Orestes with the security of neutrality and noncommitment: "You are free to turn your hand to anything. But you know better than to commit yourself. . . ." And Electra is weak in denying reality to the dream that would truly express herself, the murder of her mother: "Of course I deny it. Wait! Well, perhaps in a way. . . . Oh, I don't know. I dreamt the crime, but you

carried it out, you murdered your own mother."

As a philosophical concept projected into an ethical frame of reference (as it inevitably must be since this is undeniably a philosophy not of speculation but of action), human freedom means that ". . . in the bright realm of human values we have no excuse behind us, nor justification before us" (Sartre, *L'Etre et le Neant*). Universally valid moral absolutes do not exist. There is no transcendent self or transcendent deity to whom we can look for directives; our transcendence is a function of our present choices which are freely made. Orestes defies the prerogative of the gods to determine *a priori* the rightness of an action. He confronts Zeus after the double murder with a resolute declaration: "I am no criminal, and you have no power to make me atone for an act I don't regard as a crime." Sartre's authentic individual, in an isolation imposed upon him by his freedom, and in response to the requirements of his unique situation, must make his moral choices and bear the responsibility for them. Once a man has become self-conscious he is morally obliged to act in no way that will deaden his preoccupation with his integrity. He is obliged to impregnate all of his actions with some sense of their relevance to him. This notion of authenticity, followed to its logical conclusion, would require that the individual do unto others as he would have them do unto him. While there are no universal objective norms, once he adopts a norm for himself, he wills it to be of universal validity. Orestes having discovered his human reality, wants Electra to act according to her awareness. He tells Zeus, ". . . her suffering comes from within, and only she can rid herself of it. For she is free." And he desperately wants his insight to penetrate into her consciousness. Answering her query as to where they would go if they left Argos, Orestes gently tells her: "I don't know. Towards ourselves. Beyond the rivers and mountains are an Orestes and an Electra waiting for us, and we must make our patient way towards them." Here we have the dramatization of the uncertainty, of the agonies, that inhere in the search for the spiritually valid self that Orestes has found worth suffering for.

Orestes is an example of the ethical individual who must assume responsibility for his society and work for its improvement. In

a heated debate with Zeus he rallies: "What do I care for Zeus? Justice is a matter between men, and I need no god to teach me it. It is right to restore to the people of Argos their sense of human dignity." Sartre implies that the individual is most likely to move towards integration of his personality and the progressive realization of his goals if he has a rational understanding of the human condition. Orestes is supposed to be the instrument of emancipation to free Argos from "the good old piety of yore, rooted in terror."

*Les Mouches* dramatizes Orestes' growth from his initially frivolous freedom to the intense, terrifying metaphysical freedom of the moment when he passionately claims his action in front of the masses of Argos: "You see me, men of Argos, you understand that my crime is wholly mine; I claim it as my own, for all to know; it is my glory, my life's work, and you can neither punish me nor pity me." Sartre's use of the terms "my act, . . . my own, . . . my crime" emphasizes the reciprocal bond between man and what he does. *Les Mouches* might be called a "metaphor that purports to show man that responsibility is not synonymous with guilt and that the world of men is made up only of the impact of actions, whose meaning comes only from the men who have committed them or suffered them" (Thody, *Jean-Paul Sartre*). Orestes' stature as a hero comes from his acceptance of the crushing responsibility of giving the world a meaning that comes from himself alone. As he begins his dramatic rise to heroic magnitude he announces his decision to act to Electra: "I'm still too light, I must take a burden on my shoulders, a load of guilt so heavy as to drag me down, right down into the abyss of Argos."

The bare action, without dwelling upon its metaphysical overtones, is acutely reminiscent of pure classical intensity and seriousness. Man's total being is engagé; he is lending all of his energy to surviving a crisis. Orestes is confronted with the question of what he is. His drama consists in his suspension between possible definitions of his being. He says: "I wander from city to city, a stranger to all others and to myself. . . . The solid passions of the living were never mine. . . . I want to be a man who belongs to some place." One can notice the contrast between the collective spectacle of the people of Argos, where things and individuals must sacrifice their sponta-

neity and freedom defined as part of a whole, and Orestes who stands out at the height of the action as an individual who answers for his own thoughts, fears and acts.

Precise discussion of either the philosophical theories or the ethical postulates of Jean-Paul Sartre tends to vagueness and often to redundancy because his intensity of mission does not seem proportional to his logical consistency. I have limited myself to a discussion of the objective meaning projected from *Les Mouches*. I have tried to see what he says rather than whether or not what he says is logically or experientially valid. And I think that there is no doubt but that Sartre is the professional philosopher *par excellence* in this drama. Any questions that would ordinarily be limited to the drama as literature are not fully explained unless through an examination of his position as a philosopher utilizing the propaganda potential of the theater. For instance, why did Sartre use the Oresteian myth when he was so concerned with the condition of modern man? Besides its universal psychic referent, I think that his principal reason for using the myth was because its traditional insistence on the theme of fatality allowed him by contrast to bring out his own ideas of liberty and individual responsibility. Secondly, it provides him with a sufficiently horrible action that would not have to run the gauntlet of an incredulous audience before it was accepted as the simple fact that it must be. "Perhaps the religious implications were convenient parallels to his critical disapproval of the Vichy regime and the Catholic Church in World War II France" (Thody, *Jean-Paul Sartre*).

But what distinguishes Sartre's drama from a purely philosophical work is the dramatic and concrete nature of the philosophy itself. The fundamental problem of the definition of man and his existence *sur la terre* is truly embodied in living action, in dynamic engagement. *Les Mouches* first presents to the spectator a seemingly familiar plot structure. From there, Sartre leads on from a universe of perception, common sense and psychological habits to an existential conclusion, sometimes difficult in its newness. This is evident in Orestes' words: "Farewell, my people, try to reshape your lives. All here is new, all must begin anew. And for me too, a new life is beginning. A strange life. . ." The progression leading to the statement of this

new reality makes up the greater part of the play. Jacques Guicharnaud feels that Sartre's use of the naturalistic technique supports his reason for using mythology as a plot basis. If this is a fact I think that it is possible to class him with the phenomenologists who wish to bring the audience directly to the "case" and to expose gradually the existential attitude within this naturalism.

The concept of drama as ritual that would bind *Les Mouches* to its Greek original is virtually absent. This is philosophy in dead earnest, an often uninterrupted flow of ideas that suffers from the lack of ironic relief that Giradoux in *La Guerre de Troie* and Camus in *Caligula* sprinkle through their plays. It is obvious throughout that Sartre is the writer committed to informing man about his human condition. His characters make speeches far too long, emphasizing the differences from the original legend. The ruthlessly clear language stops short of no horror. Zeus describes the inhabitants of Argos to Orestes: "See that old creature over there, creeping away like a beetle on her little black feet, and hugging the walls. Well, she's a good specimen of the squat black vermin that teem in every cranny of this town."

The symbolism of the play is overt, sometimes inartistic, repetitious to the point of redundancy. One of the basic motifs, the desire for self-realization, is stated all too often. Nevertheless, *Les Mouches* is a moving drama because of the force and immediacy of the author's determination to free man so that he can be human. Although the tragic tension is dissolved with the murder of the royal pair, the play becomes subsequently rather more than less problematic. It is then that Orestes has to prove himself heroic in owning up to his action. But if we want to go beyond Sartre's words in the mouth of Orestes we can validly say that his crime does not really commit him to anything concrete and hence he is a less forceful dramatic example of the existential man that Sartre would have us imitate. The final scene is too facile for reality's sake. Orestes seems to feel that he has saved Argos and substantially freed the people simply by setting them an aristocratic example. Sartre seems not to consider the real relation of a man or a group of men to religion or their traditional commitment to an external superior force. He perhaps justifiably attacks the absurdities of decadent fanaticism

and determinism, but his initial disregard for the more profound realities of the religious experience take away from the dramatically comprehensible impact of his thesis. Even in his liberating act, Orestes remains alone. His remoteness always seems to prevent him from coming to grips with the viscosity of reality that Sartre so effectively symbolizes with his spiders and flies. Electra in her over-excited humanity is philosophically vocal but rarely dramatically eloquent.

It is no doubt the exaggeration of the philosophical that limits the dramatic. Aegisthus and Clytemnestra are the petrified counterparts of the passions of Orestes and Electra. They are eternal prisoners of their deed of murder. Nevertheless, this drama is exciting because it has a peculiar tangibility for a modern audience. Its transcendence is not of the Shakespearean or Sophoclean magnitude,

but it realizes the immanence of man, of man in the world, and the collectivity of men. It presents man with the challenge to push through the rigid limitation of exhausted forms to new existence and freedom.

"Man is free, he makes his decision in isolation and anguish, and no one but he can be held responsible for it. Even if God did exist, no ethical principles could be deduced from His existence, for the liberty of man makes him quite independent of the God who created him." (Greene, *The Existential Ethic*) Apropos of this ethic of freedom we listen to Orestes' confrontation of Zeus:

*What is there between thee and me?  
We shall pass by each other without  
touching, like two ships which pass in the  
night. Thou art a God and I am free; we  
are equally alone, and we both feel the  
same anguish.*

## Valedictory

—Everyone is created a specific piece in this game,  
but the beauty of being a pawn is  
that if you make it across the board  
you can be what you choose—  
and the beauty of being anything else is evident.

You have to listen very closely, though,  
because the players aren't allowed to shout  
or use their hands to push you where they will.  
You train yourself to listen very closely.

A good thing is to watch the other pieces;  
if you can figure out how each one moves  
it's easier to see what you are doing,  
both in relation to the other pieces  
and in the tall intentions of the players;  
always remember you are pawn, not player.

Though sometimes you regret to leave a square,  
the hardest thing—more trying than the pieces  
who never move or listen—is to lose  
the nobler pieces to the other side,  
and still to have to journey on alone.

—Come to attention now, and fare thee well.

Kathleen Marotta, '64

# Bouquet for a Crazy Lady

*Jeanne E. Paradis, '64*

"Eee-ow-kee!" That was Dee calling her in their private code. Emily stuffed the last few bites of peanut butter sandwich into her mouth. Her mother was still on the phone so she dumped the rest of her milk down the sink and ran out the back door.

It was white and hot in the sun except for a red towel on the clothesline. The porch burned comfortably beneath her bare feet and sent heat waves simmering up her legs. She was glad it was summer and that she didn't have to wear shoes.

Dee was drawing faces in the dirt at the bottom step, and there, leaning on the stair rail, was Giorgianna Le Brun, her red hair sticking out all over the place.

"Oh, hi Giorgianna, when did *you* get here?"

Giorgianna looked her up and down and she suddenly became aware of the jelly stain on her jersey.

"Well, hello Emmy. I got here yesterday only Granny took me and Billy over to Paragon Park so I didn't come over 'til today."

She hated to be called Emmy and Giorgianna knew it.

They had to stand around in the yard awhile since they couldn't decide what to do; at least Giorgianna couldn't. She couldn't go swimming because granny wouldn't let her swim in the harbor. She didn't want to go minnowing 'cause young ladies didn't run around the mud flats catching dirty old fish that died the next day (she was probably afraid she'd get her fancy sunsuit messed



up). She wouldn't go out in the woods behind Aunty Rita's by the magic pool and play fairyland. That was for babies and *she* was almost nine.

Dee agreed to everything—even about the minnowing. She watched every move Giorgianna made.

Emily stood on one foot and then the other, curling her toes happily in the warm grass. She was going to suggest hunting snakes under the stone wall when she caught Giorgianna watching her pick a scab on her knee.

"Emily, what *are* you doing?"

Guiltily Emily rubbed away the bubble of bright red that was beginning to spread and pretended to be interested in the stain on her shirt. "Nuthin'," she replied in innocence.

"Really Emmy, you are the *weirdest* child!" Giorgianna made a disgusted face.

Dee made one too, and then pretended the sight of blood made her sick. She began to sway and moan, holding her stomach as though she was gonna throw-up any minute. Dee liked to pretend things.

Giorgianna looked kind of worried so Emily said, "Pooh! She isn't going to die! Why just yesterday we played pirates on the lobster

crate down the beach and she had her hand cut *clear* off and didn't say a word!" She sniffed like her mother did when she didn't believe something. "'Sides, it's stopped bleeding. Let's do something 'stead of standing around all day."

"I know what we *could* do only I s'pose you kids wouldn't dare," said Giorgianna.

Dee was sure right away that she dared do anything Giorgianna did. "Yes we would, Giorgianna. Come on, tell us."

"Yeah, come on, tell us," Emily teased.

"Well, all right, only you have to never tell anyone 'cause it's a secret. On your honor?"

"Cross our hearts!"

"Well, if you'll never tell—there's a crazy lady in Granny's house and—"

"A real crazy lady?" Dee was ready to believe anything.

"Aw cut it out Giorgianna. We know crazy people are put in nut houses."

"Yes there is. She thinks I'm her mother and she's real old. If I go in the room she talks to me like I'm her mother. You kids're just scared to go. I knew you wouldn't dare."

"Oh, I'm not scared," said Dee, but her voice was kinda small and funny. "I'm not afraid of an old crazy lady."

"I'm not scared either," Emily asserted, though she was. She had never seen a real crazy lady but it sure didn't sound like much fun. She didn't want to go but she didn't want the other kids to know she was scared.

"Well then, let's go—only you kids just better not tell *anyone* or we'll get into trouble." Then, before they went over to her grandmother's house, Giorgianna made them take an oath never to let anyone know.

I wish I finished my milk, Emily thought as she followed the other two down the road.

It was cool walking under the big trees. Emily tried to step in a sunspot at every step. At the turn in the road they cut across Conley's field to the swamp. The swamp grass was hard and yellow.

When they reached the line of the silvery willows they left the swamp and entered the woods. It wasn't a very big woods but it was the best around. Right in the middle grew a huge hill of honeysuckle vines. Everyone called it the "Jouncies" because it was the best place ever to jump up and down on. They stopped for awhile to play. It was

the best fun in the summer when the flowers sent up great clouds of sweet smell before they died. It almost made Emily dizzy. She was sorry to kill the flowers but she liked to jounce.

Before long, though, Giorgianna got tired of playing because she wanted to hurry up and show them the crazy lady. Dee followed quickly but she didn't look like she really wanted to. Emily hung back to pick some honeysuckle but the others kept calling her. She left reluctantly.

Giorgianna and Dee walked along the stone wall while Emily added some dog-tooth violets to her bouquet. She stepped on a head of skunk cabbage. It sure smelled terrible. She wrinkled her nose.

They took a short cut through the orchard. First they looked to make sure that old witch, Mrs. Crane, wasn't around. Just on the other side was Giorgianna's granny's house.

It was very quiet, almost haunted-looking, the way the windows stared black out of the white walls. They didn't talk much going up the driveway and into the kitchen. Emily closed the door softly behind her. She looked at Dee. Her face was a yellowish color. She didn't look very daring now. She looked like she really was going to be sick.

Emily clutched her bouquet tighter and held it stiffly in front of her. They had begun to wilt but the sweet honeysuckle smell wafted up to her. From somewhere in the house came a murmur, soft and incessant.

Giorgianna led the way down a cold, dark hall and up a steep stairway. Dee tagged close behind her. Emily was scared. The murmur grew to a low mumble.

"Here she is!" Giorgianna smiled proudly.

The other two girls followed her into the room. It was very dark. The green sickroom shades were pulled all the way down. From a corner came a mumble, rising and falling from the white bedspread.

"Ma-ma—mama, mama!" came a sudden scream from the bed. Dee jumped back suddenly and bumped right into Emily.

Giorgianna laughed and walked up to the bed. "I'm not your mother!" she sounded ugly. "Whatsa matter with you kids? You scared?" she pulled Dee over by the arm. "Well, come on!"

"Ma-mama. Come—come." She sounded like she was crying. "Mama! Please!"

Something moved at the pit of Emily's

stomach. The other two laughed. She didn't think it sounded funny—it hurt her somehow.

"Quiet you old hag! Don't you even know your own mother?" Giorgianna laughed at her. Then she put out her hand and pulled at the bedsheet. "You're crazy, old lady."

"Yeah," Dee said, "and you don't talk right. You're erazy." And she giggled.

Emily stumbled over to the bed. She felt all alone in the whole world. She looked right into the old lady's faee. It was skinny, with wrinkles, and real, real old. If it weren't for her eyes she would be dead. Her little blaek eyes just stared and stared and didn't see anything. They were cold. Emily shivered.

Suddenly the old lady strecthed out her hand and grasped for Emily. "Mama!" she cried, "Please."

Emily jumped baek. Something caught in her throat so she could hardly breathe.

The other kids thought that was real funny.

But the old lady didn't seem to understand. She didn't try to hurt anyone. Emily looked at her for a long time. She didn't think it was very funny.

"Say Emmy, why don't ya give your flowers to the crazy lady, huh? Wouldn't that be eute? Emmy giving flowers to a erazy lady!" She

could hardly say anything more she was laughing so hard.

"Yeah, Emmy, why don't ya? Whatsa matter? You afraid of her or something?" And Dee shrieked with laughter.

She hated them! Hated them all; Giorgianna, Dee and the helpless old crazy lady. They were horrible. She turned and stared at them—the worst look—until they stopped laughing. They were surprised. They were seared now. Then she threw her bouquet at them, hard as she could. A piecee of honeysuckle stuck in Giorgianna's hair. A violet fell on the spread. The old lady's hand plueked at it; pulled it to pieces until it wasn't a flower anymore.

Then Emily ran. Down the dark, narrow stairs and through the quiet house. Her bare feet slapped hollowly on the eold linoleum of the kitchen floor. She was halfway down the driveway before the sereen door slammed, shattering the dozing afternoon.

Eehoing and re-echoing her footsteps followed her as she stumbled through the orchard. She had to get away from the blaek unseeing eyes, the age-cracked faee, the ugly laughing—most of all the laughing.

As she ran she noticed the cut on her knee bleeding again. She began to cry.

## *I'D RATHER BE ALONE IN SNOW*

I'd rather be alone in snow  
Than with you near  
Eyes shut in so by shaded fear  
Of night falling in flakes of light.

I hear your soul unseeing  
Echo, shattering deseending silence.  
My soul aches soft . . . then,  
                hushed so  
I'd rather be alone in snow.

Winifred Welch, '64



## THE CHASE

*Ann L. White, '64*

Skinner started up as the hard morning light struck at him. He had to start running again. Keep going, don't stop, don't look back—those were the rules. He didn't even have to think about them anymore. But his chest was hurting him. It wanted him to stop. It wanted to make him stop and get caught. He was strong though, and he wasn't going to give in. Skinner tensed his mind so that the pain couldn't get inside and make him weak. He ran on.

They couldn't be far behind him now. He had heard them in the distance the other night and today they were much closer.

I've never seen you, but I know you, Skinner told them in his mind. You're dark and tall and strong; your faces are ugly with a three days beard like mine. Oh yes, I know

you—you efficient men who hunt human beings down like animals. You use dogs to follow the scent—and you have no right!

Skinner wanted to stop for just a minute, to turn around and scream at them, "I'm a man! I'm running, but I'm a man!"

He couldn't do it though. That's what they wanted—for him to stop and give them a chance to catch up.

But there was another way of telling them; he knew what to do. Deliberately now, but without slowing down, Skinner drove his feet into the ground, digging down hard with the toe of his shoe. They could follow his track, but they would have to look at it. And when they did, they would see it was the footprint of a man and not an animal.

"I run because I want to run. I'm willing it!

I'm willing it!" His words became a part of the steady rhythm of his footsteps thudding on the frozen ground.

But what was he running for? He kept forgetting. He had done . . . something wrong. That was it. He had killed someone. He was a killer. That's why he had to run. He had killed one, two . . . no, seven men. But it wasn't his fault. He hadn't even wanted to kill that first time. He had done it then to save himself. Kill or be killed, that was another rule. He had no choice. But when it was over, he remembered the fierce joy he had felt as his hands squeezed and squeezed, as he struggled with the force of a man's life and had beaten it with his own strength. This was why he had killed again and again. He had to do it, he wasn't responsible. He needed to feel this power. And the need kept coming back, driving him on, beating at him incessantly until he grappled with warm human flesh again and squeezed it until it no longer defied him.

But now he was being hunted, and his strong arms and hands just hung from his shoulders, dragging him down, holding him back. If only he could get rid of them! If he flung them down behind him, maybe they'd

be satisfied. After all, his hands had done it, not him. "If thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off." Wasn't something like that right in the Bible? Christ or somebody had said it. That's what he would do—tear off his hands and throw them to the men with the dogs. Then he would be free. His hands were the beasts; he was a man. Let them take his hands before a jury; let them try his hands for murder. He himself would testify against them. "I'll go to the witness stand and point my finger at them and . . ." Skinner laughed out loud. He would point his finger . . . at his hands. Oh that was funny, really funny. He thought he'd die laughing.

The young police lieutenant felt sick. Joe had killed him with the first shot. Right through the back of the head. Joe always was a good shot. "So that's Skinner," he said to himself, but Joe heard him.

"Look kid, don't feel sorry for him. He shoulda got a lot worse. He was no more than an animal—a stinking, murdering animal. So forget the great humanitarian bit."

The lieutenant looked down again at Skinner's shriveled body. Just an animal . . . but what had he been laughing about?



# A GROWING TIME

*Barbara Lissandri, '64*

Rickey heard the front door open. He waited. Nothing. His mother was evidently taking off her hat and coat in the hall. She walked into the living room and passed on through it to the kitchen.

Ricky swallowed hard. Then, "Hiya, Mom."

"Oh." Mrs. De Felice remembered with a start that she had a son. "Hello, son."

Son. He wondered why she called him son now. She never used to. He stirred uneasily, then he let "The Hardy Boys" engulf him completely again.

"Ricky, come wash your hands. Supper's almost ready." His mother's voice was crisp.

Ricky lingered. The fire was warm and he liked losing himself in "The Hardy Boys."

"Ricky, damn it, get out here and wash your hands before I come in and make you wish you had."

"Damn." "Hell." Why his mother used those words all of a sudden was a mystery to him. He abandoned his book and ran to the kitchen.

"Ouch, mama mia!"

"Gee, I'm sorry, Auntie Sylvia!"

"For heaven's sakes, what's the matter with you? Are you trying to break your aunt's leg? That's all I'd need!" Mrs. De Felice's voice was raspy, tired, grating.

Ricky walked carefully over to the sink. His aunt was rubbing her twisted leg where the mark of his heel was. He crumpled up inside. As it was, life was hard enough for his crippled aunt, he realized, and now he had just made it harder.

He stood at the sink and wished fervently that his mother would lift him to the faucet. He was still too short to reach it comfortably, so he and his mother had a nightly ritual constructed around the washing of his hands. She would boost him to the faucet, affectionately pat his behind, and murmur, "Are you ever going to grow, caro mio?" Their ritual had not taken place for some days now.

Supper was a silent affair, heavy and

oppressive. It used to be gay and comfortable, but that was when his father was there.

"Everything'll be O.K. when Dad gets back," he assured himself. "Mom'll be able to stay home instead of having to run the store and then Auntie Syl won't have to do everything around the house." He dropped the greasy chicken wing he was twiddling.

"I see you've still got your school pants on," Mrs. De Felice snapped.

"I'll go change them," he whimpered.

"You can sit there now. The harm's done. As if I haven't enough to do without worrying about your clothes, too. And will you please lean forward when you eat?"

He stretched his fork into the salad bowl. Mrs. De Felice had been trying to break him of the habit of regarding the salad bowl as his own private property, and now she hissed through clenched teeth, "Take it out on your own dish. Are you a human being, or an animal?"

Rickey withdrew his hand quickly, nervously, and in a hurry he upset the milk bottle.

"Damn it all, leave the table, will you, and don't come back until you learn some manners. I don't know what kind of a tramp I've brought you up to be."

Ricky slid out of his seat willingly. He seized the opportunity of escaping the heavy atmosphere in the kitchen.

"Maybe Dad said he would call and he hasn't," he reasoned to himself. "But gee whiz, with Nanna so sick. Mom should realize that he hasn't got time. He didn't even have time to say good-by to me," he remembered ruefully.

Ricky had never seen his grandmother. Chicago was too many dollars away from Stamford, Connecticut. The call that Nanna De Felice was seriously ill had come in the middle of the night, and Mr. De Felice had left hastily.

Ricky stood on tiptoes to get his jacket out of the hall closet. His mother's coat hung

haphazardly from the chair in front of the telephone table; her hat was perched on top of the telephone. Ricky was puzzled for a moment; he knew his mother to be a meticulous woman.

He shrugged, zipped his jacket, and went outside. It was cold. He sat on the front steps and drew his knees up to his chest to keep warm.

"Hiya, Rick."

"Hi, Steve."

"Doin' anything?"

"Nope."

"Wanna game of checkers?"

"O.K."

Ricky plodded across the street beside Steve. The McGillicuddy home was well-lighted. Ricky settled himself on the front porch while Steve disappeared in search of the checkers. Mr. and Mrs. McGillieuddy were in the parlor, and Ricky could hear snatches of their conversation when they raised their voices. Mrs. McGillieuddy seemed to be doing most of the talking.

"The poor woman . . . to do with the boy?"

"My father says you should come in out of the cold. We can play in the kitchen." Steve popped his head out the door long enough to deliver his message, then waited inside for Ricky. They had to pass through the parlor on their way to the kitchen.

"Riek, m' boy, how are you?" Mr. McGillieuddy had a booming voice. Ricky somehow felt at home. He had never been inside the McGillicuddy house before.

"Fine, thank you, Mr. McGillieuddy," he replied, awkwardly shifting from one foot to the other.

"Gonna beat the hell out of Steve tonight?" Mr. McGillicuddy continued in a friendly tone.

"Gonna try darn hard!" Ricky said emphatically, with a bit more self-assurance.

"Good for you, boy! I might come out and watch later."

The kitchen was bright and warm. Ricky and Steve commenced their game, punctuated every now and then by monosyllabic conversation.

"What is she going to do all by herself?" Mrs. McGillicuddy had picked up the thread of her talk interrupted by the boys' arrival.

Ricky wondered why Steve had asked him to play. The two boys didn't know each other that well.

"Heard from your father yet?" Steve inquired.

"Nope." Then, "He's probably got a lot on his mind."

"Well, I wouldn't worry if I were you. He's bound to call sooner or later."

"What do you mean, 'sooner or later?'" Ricky wondered irritably. "He'll be home just as soon as everything's O.K. with Nanna. And if she dies, he'll be home after the funeral. . . ."

"And how are the two champions doing?" Mr. McGillieuddy was making good his promise to observe the game. "Rick, m' boy, I thought you'd have it all sewn up by now." He slapped Ricky affectionately on the back and pulled up a chair. The game was livelier now with Mr. McGillieuddy there.

"Isn't this nice," Mrs. McGillicuddy came in the kitchen beaming. "I'll make some hot chocolate and we can have a party. Ricky, you're our son for tonight. And any time you want to come over, dear, don't hesitate. Any friend of Steve's is a friend of ours. Isn't that right, Dad?"

The poor woman—all by herself. . . . I wouldn't worry. He'll call sooner or later. . . . You're our son for tonight. . . . Come over anytime. Right, Dad? The bits and snatches he had heard that night raced through Ricky's head and all of a sudden made sense.

He knew now that his father wasn't in Chicago at his Nanna's; he had never been there. No one knew where he was; no one knew if he was coming back, least of all his mother.

His mother—right now she'd probably be in the kitchen, mending the rip in the knee of his only other good pair of pants.

"Mom!" his anguished cry was out of place in the gay McGillicuddy kitchen.

"Now wait a minute, son." Mr. McGillieuddy realized his plight and went to console him, but Ricky was too quiet.

Through the living room, out the door, down the steps, across the street—he covered the short distance between the two houses in seconds, but it seemed to him as if he had shackles on his feet. Finally he reached the front door. He flung it wide, and crying out, "Ma, Ma!" he raced to the kitchen. His mother had flung the pants on the table and was running to meet him.

Q  
U  
A  
R  
R  
Y

I was small.  
At the sound of wax  
Spluttering with fiercee church intensity  
I started up the aisle—running  
Between the pillar and the steps  
I made an infinite motion—checked  
only by the wood door  
Weighing slow as it turned  
onto snow,  
Trackless to the valley rim.

Something heaved in that hard run  
hushing as I turned then—  
Played statues with me. That night  
I brought home fists of snow. . .  
pelted the tree beside the house—  
Once  
made  
a near miss.

I lay holy still. Bed was cold.  
I was a dead lady (hands so)  
While faces blinked in the pink light  
Into faces, flowers, at me.  
My stiff smile stopped, ten o'clock.  
Tea cups under locks rim the room with dust.  
If someone polite would break the iece  
And pour. . . .

All substance shriveled but the snow.  
Paeked in painless in a night's fall  
It had filled the hollow—  
hiding house-brown spots . . .  
fuzzed a grey scratreh of trees.  
The sheared hill would have made precarious  
Donkey travel. Something (I was sure)  
A flower that slipped from his ear  
when the small beast shivered  
Had pocked the snow. I had all hours to  
dinner  
For searing up  
Humps of dried leaves.  
Dead birds I found  
layered in the cold  
Pulled against a gloss that muffled meaning.

Joyce Hallisey, '63

At the door turning  
I almost . . .  
Poked—curious—  
That pink mass of rabbit  
Hung  
Thin legs  
Tied to the rain spout.  
How early were they out  
to give him that third eye?

If I had been with them  
I would have said yes simple  
and touched  
that great gap  
Dropping  
    away under my hand.  
Standing here after Easter death  
I can't admit a eirele.  
This kill means Christmas—  
Company.  
The rest's  
a paper scissors' trick. The eye  
is crayoned.

Christ was eoming—  
Came  
with ealender quickness crossed out—  
in a rush of air under the door—  
Rubbed glass chinks.

The rabbit was gone—a perfect time.  
Fed-quiet, company perched out on stiff  
ehairs.  
I met Him then . . . light-prodded . . .  
marvelous in wood.

Following a donkey way  
I rode heavy into orange weather.  
Splinters of a blue town beneath  
Shook Him out in relief.  
Christ pieeed . . . made Christ and more.  
I could have slipped Him into a sock then  
or closed a box and had . . . a berry taste.  
There was something there for sifting.

This rabbit sprouts perennial  
at the edge of Easter.  
Turning his ears he waits  
Then folds  
neat  
    through a narrow door.  
The still-shivering grass seemed proof enough.  
Was he real?

For the skilled, Christ pulls out easy.  
A subtefuge of palm  
Drew Him into town.  
They got Him in the end  
on a kiss.

There's something to be said for Judas' motion  
Sprung pillar to steps along a silver coil.  
He went . . . far . . .  
    in the dark  
As if he had been going a long time

Sensing sly in the wood  
and in a raw jerk of rope  
around his neck  
Some prize.  
How could he have known  
From the beginning the term  
Hung dark sweet in the balance?  
Or was the last aet something  
different . . .  
Only a cancelling out?  
Even Judas yes—  
Knew his mind I think.

I wanted Him . . . kept ahead—  
Not that face-elose across at Supper.  
The gaze (too steady)  
Silver-baeked a question  
Confirming my first motion slow  
As part of a small pantomime  
in the snow.

The glass men sat  
Wrought in placee against the cold.  
I started up the aisle past blotched light  
Running.

Stepping  
baek  
to feel something of myself  
in this winter place with the rabbit  
Dangling,  
I hear them comment,  
“This supple Christ  
Pins poor . . .  
Pulls holes.”

Still they poke  
to find out God in Him . . .

This Christ? or some  
Broken doll old- Christmas?  
He was rabbit-real, left tracks  
At the edge of Easter.

It's dark now as they break him off—  
Dead icicle.  
Someone's switched cups at tea.  
The plates were counted out  
Before I came. No room,  
the rabbit said.  
If I've been tricked . . .  
I'll back out . . .  
like Alice.

# What's in a Name?

Christine Wroblewski, '65

I read a very interesting article in the paper today: more than fifty percent of the people in this country wish they could change their names. To these people I say—go to it! But choose your alias carefully. Look what the distinctive "Machine-gun" did for Mr. Kelly. "Legs" Diamond didn't do too badly either.

But, don't think aliases belong only to criminals. My family, which hasn't had an arrest in the last five weeks, is rife with aliases. I am a prime example. No one but my parents and my grandmother knows that my name is really Krystyna. It was concealed so well that even I didn't know that was my name until I was sixteen.

My brother's problem is a little different. The priest baptized him John Robert. My parents call him Francis Bernard. He insists his name is Frank, when he's not calling himself Matthew or Matt, or being called Ski by his friends.

I was seventeen before I found out what my mother's real name is. Since my tenderest years I had blindly trusted that that dear woman's name was Kay. At sixteen I met a man who asked: "You're Charlotte's daughter, aren't you?" I, of course, avowed I was *not* Charlotte's daughter. But, alas, I was. Then, it took me another year to discover Charlotte is an alias for Casmiera. But I can't blame Mom. After all, *her* mother hasn't used her real name in years.

My mother's talent rubbed off on her godchild and namesake. Miss Charlotte Skiba would be unknown to ninety percent of her friends. But mention Shirley—or worse yet, Yoie or Skib—and immediately she is recognized. (I'm still trying to figure out how "Yoie" got in there).

The "W" in my father's name isn't technically an alias, but I still haven't found out what it represents. However, what my father lacks, my uncle makes up. He was elected mayor under the name Anthony Balicki. The only trouble is, it isn't his name by even the wildest stretch of the imagination. It's Chub. I ought to know; I've called him that since I could talk.

Aunt Jule doesn't even have a Julie, Julia, Julie, Julianna or anything beginning with a "J" in her legal moniker. Her name is Praxedes. That fact didn't stop me, though. For years she was "Ant Choo." My tongue never unwound enough to wrap around Praxedes so she's still Jule, even though she isn't.

The grand prize winner, in my estimation, is my Aunt Claire. Why this woman's picture isn't hanging in the post office I will never know. Her driver's license carries the name Claire Balicki. Her checking account is made out to a Lodja B. Blaszkiewicz. She signs receipts with Clara, using whichever last name strikes her fancy that day. Her church envelopes attest to the generosity of a Balbina Balicki. I've seen her birth certificate. You guessed it—Leokadya Balbina Blaszkiewicz. O.K. Let's see someone beat that one!

# *Tell Me*

*"Tell me  
about the fairies."*

"There isn't much to say—do you mean  
where they live  
and all?"

*"Everything."*

"Some things, you know,  
fairies don't like  
to have told. . . ."

*"Do they eat cereal for breakfast  
and sandwiches for lunch?"*

"Not exactly.  
Sit up here, beside me . . . that's it;  
In summer months, and  
toward the early fall,  
fairies make their nests  
in tops  
of down-soft  
thistles.

They hide there in rose-green thorn-bush castles  
where no one sees  
or hears them until  
you, or I,  
pick off a stem  
and blow them  
high—to—heaven,  
send them  
riding  
on the drafts  
Away from fortresses and moats."

*"Do we ever know  
Where they come down?"*

"We never really see them, but  
it's been said  
they slide inside of pine cones  
to warm themselves in brown seed-blankets  
while snow  
is on the moss. Then,  
on polished nights—  
they dance."

*"Where?"*

"Down  
under  
trees  
and onto open fields  
where snow and moon mix light  
to fill a waxen ballroom. . . ."

*"But,  
do they get hungry?"*

"Of course.  
It's hearsay that they gather  
juniper and dandelion arrows  
for a year of feasting—  
spring to spring.  
When grass buds show, the fairies  
run to deep woods,  
find a crocus,  
sit, and wait the climbing sun.  
They fly, make mischief  
with each other,  
and on rare occasions,  
nip at children . . .  
Just to prove they're  
not a thought,  
nor blot of ink,  
but  
so."

*"Oh, I see. . . ."*

*Carol Ann Glowacki '63*

# *Occupational Eavesdropping*

Dorothy Erpen, '65

It was eleven-thirty. I lay folded upon the couch. I lay practically in a prenatal lump . . . I dozed . . . I started . . . I gasped. I contemplated the movement of the minute hand of the clock. It was eleven-forty. I shifted my gaze inward. I groped my way around the smoky world in my cerebrum. With graspings and stretchings I hunted for some, one, measly memory to reminisce about. (I *had* to reminisce for a writing assignment.) I yawned. Eyelids heavy, I scribbled on paper the following possible topics: "The Most Remarkable Spider Web I've Ever Seen"; "My Town Has a Sewer Problem" and "How Nee and Warm My Bed Was at Eleven-Fifty."

In desperation I pulled out the stale memories of last summer. In fact, I felt so desperate I chose to be reckless. Around twelve I mumbled to my conscience, "Looks like the only thing to write about is the little things you've eavesdropped." That was base. ("Basest" is what our Latin teacher, describing Catiline, would call it.)

Unfortunately I had not been employed all summer at jobs that allowed eavesdropping. While I labeled books for a nunnery I couldn't speak and the only noise was the flick and flip of the leaves of paper while bells sliced the day into neat divisions.

But in the rest of my jobs, whisperings were both audible and cognizable. I sat at one sandwiched between two desks. One day the man behind me described an apartment house to a friend. "You ought to take a look, it's furnished, heated, the floors are covered with carpets and my wife has a washing machine. I regulate the heat and the owner pays. It's right in Boston and the rent varies from \$150 to \$195." His friend agreed and said he'd look into it. Well, that was fascinating!

In reality most eavesdroppings are of this staid tone. However, I have heard some more personal and more revealing bits. For instance, a banker replied to a railroad executive, "When you started this company we loaned you the million on our personal assurance and faith in you." The man answered, "Well, mine is the only company of its kind in the world and we are growing into Japanese and European markets, blah . . . blah . . . blah. . ." Often eavesdroppings require attention and straining of the ears. Sometimes it comes quite easily. Once when I was working on the first floor, a man in a blue sport shirt and white pants stopped into the bank, ran down the stairs into the vaults, rushed up again straight to a teller and demanded, "Give me my money! I want my money. I have to buy a yacht. I'm going to buy a yacht and I'm going to use that money. Well, why don't you give it to me?" He hardly whispered. He shouted. He yelled the last question. The whole floor was staring.

But the focus of an eavesdropper is usually one person: a man in his office whistling *O Salutaris Hostia* as he dials a number. Then, "Bob, I got a new secretary. She's a cutie. No, she can't type. But she's wow! Prendigle won't like her. Yah, but she's cute."

Sometimes, of course, the very ponderousness of the eavesdropped words weights the listener. None of Catiline's rabble felt baser than the author when she heard an old man question a young man, "Hey, did you fight in the last war?" "Yah, in Korea," he answered. They walked away silent.

You'd be surprised how wide awake I was when the clock chimed one.



**The Centaur.** John Updike. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.

This latest novel by John Updike (author of *Rabbit, Run*), is, considered on one level, the retelling of the myth of Chiron—the wisest and noblest of the centaurs who gave up his immortality on behalf of Prometheus. It is also the story of Mr. Caldwell, a general science teacher at Olinger High, told sometimes in retrospect by Caldwell's fifteen-year-old son Peter, and sometimes in the present from Caldwell's point of view. A third level is produced by the mingling of these two. Caldwell becomes Chiron, Peter becomes Prometheus and Olinger High, Mt. Olympus. This intermingling of mythology and reality effects two things for Updike—the revitalizing of the myth and the immortalizing of Caldwell in the eyes of his son.

The actual happenings themselves could seem rather pedestrian on either level. Caldwell (Chiron) is caught between an uninterested class (various gods and goddesses), and an all-powerful principal (Zeus). He has trouble with his old Buick (?) and is tempted by Vera (Venus), a physical education teacher. Peter (Prometheus), experiences ambivalent feelings toward his father (Caldwell), and engages in adolescent love play with Penny (?).

The myth, as Updike portrays it, is inconsistent. He explains, "Not all the characters have a stable referent; Diefendorf, for example, is now a centaur, now a merman and sometimes even Hercules." This inconsistency

is not only confusing but also distracting. Finally, the reader just succumbs to Updike's brilliant prose. It no longer matters that Caldwell alternately walks and prances, with no hint of a changed status or role, because all the aspects taken together result in an absorbing experience which makes the literal meaning irrelevant in contrast to the entire effect of his third dimension. This dimension is not the myth revitalized nor is it the story of Caldwell. It is the awareness by the author and the reader that myths originate in reality and that the basic realities of the ancients and the moderns are intrinsically the same. The achievement of this dimension is due primarily to Updike's excellent (though at times obviously studied) craftsmanship.

Each of the chapters is in itself, a whole (two have been previously published as short stories). It is the juxtaposition of chapters, the mingling of mythology and reality which produces the novel's third level. Updike has an individual prose style. His descriptions are highly particularized yet have a universal quality. As Peter remembers an evening, ". . . I used to feel that I was trailing behind me in the bluish evening air a faint brownish trail, a flavor of oysters that made the trees and houses of the pike subaqueous. . ." He pictures the hotel clerk as, ". . . a hunchback with papery skin and hands warped and made lump-knuckled by arthritis, (who) put down his copy of *Collier's* and listened, crinkle head cocked. . . ."

As in these brief passages, the poet in Updike is obvious in the language throughout

the novel. It is not a perfect book—the language is often too studied, the action often too obscure, yet Updike's poetic synthesizing faculty is also apparent as the story portrays the myth inherent in reality—the mythical dimension not superimposed but elicited from the reality.

Margaret Gudejko, '63

**Four Playwrights and a Postscript.** David L. Grossvogel. New York: Cornell University Press, 1962.

David Grossvogel introduces us to his intention, to examine the works and theories of four contemporary playwright blasphemers, Bertolt Brecht, Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, and Jean Genet, in an effort to relate their dramatic experiments to a "comprehensive esthetic of the theater." This synthesis was destined for the Postscript of the book. The reader has a simple task, to determine Mr. Grossvogel's point of view. Its obvious negative orientation sifts out of his introductory remarks: "The stage will never be the didactic object of Brecht, the parlor tricks of Ionesco, the silenee of Beckett, the mirror game of Genet." Unfortunately, this simplified sort of dismissal characterizes the book, which might well have for its purpose to obviate the contributions of the avant-garde dramatists as merely a "part of the ceaseless redefinition of the stage," which, as such, "never create more than a brief stir."

Mr. Grossvogel's main preoccupation is with the idea that the four dramatists have eliminated man from the stage. This again seems to be an oversimplification that is insensitive to the profounder implications of contemporary dramatic experimentation. Contrary to his contention, it seems that each of the dramatists is seeking man in a very intense fashion, viz., Brecht in his *Organum for the Theater* is searching for an epic drama that will represent the human condition in our scientific age and yet still give pleasure to the spectator; Ionesco's dramatic metaphors seek to rehumanize man by showing him the degradation that a world full of objects has brought to the human soul; Beckett is "waiting for Godot," for salvation from "too long a stillness," and Genet seeks existential significance in "les fleurs du mal." The artist has

discovered a world devoid of humanity, devoid of beauty, and his drama is a witness to this horror. Yet it can be the revulsion from this confrontation that is the positive dramatic effect. It seems that Mr. Grossvogel has been taken in by the pessimism and negation that the dramatists hoped he would reject.

He admits to being concerned with the form and reasons for the "irreverence" of these *avant-garde* writers. But, in essence, the only concrete impression that is projected is that Aristotelian esthetics have been challenged, which apparently amounts to aggressive heresy, and that each of the dramatists is severely circumscribed by his efforts to replace the absolute theatrical organ prescribed by antiquity with one more functional and meaningful in our time.

Mr. Grossvogel's critical treatment of each dramatist is adequate for an introduction to the particular inspiration of each although, again, the simplification of the problems of Brecht and Genet as technical and those of Beckett and Ionesco as metaphysical does not do justice to the total artistic process handled by each one of them. There seems to be little room for quarrel with the factual assertions made by the critic regarding the theories or the works of the writers but his judgments, following from the selected facts presented, are challengeable. That Brecht uses the stage as "a forum for barter and the testing of ideas," or that Ionesco is "fighting a losing battle against the human sympathy of the stage" seem inadequate explanations for the influence and controversy that their dramas have effected. The one unity Mr. Grossvogel has discovered in the efforts of the four dramatists is their aggressive castigation of the stage and this "with contempt and little logic." What of Brecht's workable, though imperfect, "alienation" theory that would retheatricalize the theatre, reopening its channels of communication by eliminating the conditioning mechanisms that have deadened drama as a vital social institution? What of Ionesco's *Chairs* that confronts man with a world of smothering "things," a world that he has made for himself and that promises to destroy him? It must be more than aggression that makes the vibrations of these dramatists sing the same tortured, searching melody.

Mr. Grossvogel's discussion of Jean Genet is a positive critical contribution. He has succeeded in meaningfully relating Genet's pe-

culiar personal ethic to his esthetic of the theater, in describing Genet's fascination with the flavor of evil as he implements it as a source of dramatic metaphor.

Although *Four Playwrights and a Postscript* has not the tolerance nor the perception that searching, transition-torn drama requires of a critic, it is in itself a testimony to the dilemma of the artist who is faced with the often inhibiting responsibility of communication on the one hand and the problem of finding a form that will represent his vision in a dramatic context. If it does nothing else this book witnesses many of these problems.

Mary F. Courtney, '63

**Morte D'Urban.** J. F. Powers. New York:  
Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1962.

J. F. Powers' *Morte D'Urban* presents several paradoxes to the reader. One is that Urban, the hero, is still alive at the end of the book, despite its title. Another is that while the implications of the action interact remarkably at one or two removes of meaning-level, the action itself is trivial: the book is an insignificant novel but an exciting satire. The problem of interpretation perhaps inevitably overshadows any satire written in an age so profoundly pluralistic as ours.

Father Urban Roche is a "priest-promoter." His priesthood does not direct and inform his life; rather it serves as a status ticket, an easy way to affluence. People are glad to offer painless tribute to heaven by loaning heaven's priest their ear, their yacht, their credit card at the exclusive restaurant. Urban is glad to cooperate with the grace of man. Urban is not precisely a mediocre priest; he is a popular retreat preacher, a sought-after banquet speaker, quick with the *bon mot*, the *beau geste*. He is such a vigorous and enterprising promoter that he is hardly a priest at all.

Given the great body of which Urban is one member, the priest seems a blossoming Lancelot. The Order of St. Clement (founded by J. F. Powers) abounds in some of the most irretrievable atrocities that pen has sketched into habits. The Clementines are as far from any Christian ideal as pigeons from eagles. They trip their corridors and salt their eggs in apparent obliviousness to whether "living, we live in Christ." They seem never to have

gotten within carshot of Paul's "whether you eat or drink, or do anything else, do all for the glory of God"; "do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you?"

In view of his Order, and in view of the inter-order feuding and the dioecesan factiousness and competition for episcopal favor, Father Urban seems almost as valuable as he thinks he is. He is a peerless promoter. He lives up to the adolescent exhortations, "Be a winner! Never say die!" But to really enter into the priesthood that he plays as a role, the promoter must attend to other instructions: "Be ye perfect . . .," and "Unless a man be born again of water and the spirit . . ."; "whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it. . . ." This must be the death of Urban, the death of rebirth.

In J. F. Powers' novel, we see the Church succumbing to sleeping sickness. Her loyal son, Urban, tries all the wrong remedies, (e.g., he engineers a golf course of the Order of St. Clement—to attract retreatants). With profound, but not deep enough appreciation of the irony of the situation, Father Urban recalls a news evaluation: with respect to business efficiency, among international organizations, the Roman Catholic Church is "second only to Standard Oil."

No one would write or read a novel wholly comprised of the pathetic blunderings of misguided shadows of characters. The interplay of incidents and ideals, the farcical re-enactment of symbolic, noble gestures, the abuse of meaningful props, the comic counterpoint of what's supposed to be with the discrepant, deplorable actuality—all this is the satire. The straight face of the narrative mask tells the story as blandly as Urban enacts it. If sometimes it seems that someone behind the mask chuckles, or coughs discreetly, shall we assume such things to be innuendo or imagination?

To read the novel for the story or characters is futile. Anyone seeking a brilliant satire on the tragedy of our triviality, any student of the art of re-creating reality in fiction, anyone wearing the collar or the veil and struggling to preserve his dedication to one master—any of these will find in *Morte D'Urban* humor, art, insight, relevance, delight.

The book's title indicates Mr. Powers' utilization of Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* for allegory and symbol. Father Urban

plays a peculiar Lancelot. His adventures are trivial, embarrassing and ludicrous; his chivalry is misinterpreted and inappropriate. He spends his last years as a priest rather than as a promoter, but his change of heart results from a cerebral collision with a golf ball. It seems as much loss of mind as change of heart. Mr. Powers sets only this meagre *imprimatur* on his hero's last years: ". . . without

wishing to, he gained a reputation for piety he hadn't had before, which, however, was not entirely unwarranted now." *Morte D'Arthur* is a sort of swan song of chivalry. Its Lancelot is responsible for the fall of his king and of the chivalric ideal. The reader, seeing himself in Urban, wonders how far the analogy applies.

Kathleen Marotta, '64

## *On Roualt's "Three Clowns"*

They are a trinity of loneliness:  
united in despair, detached in isolation;  
seared by smoldering willows,  
scorched in charred ferns.

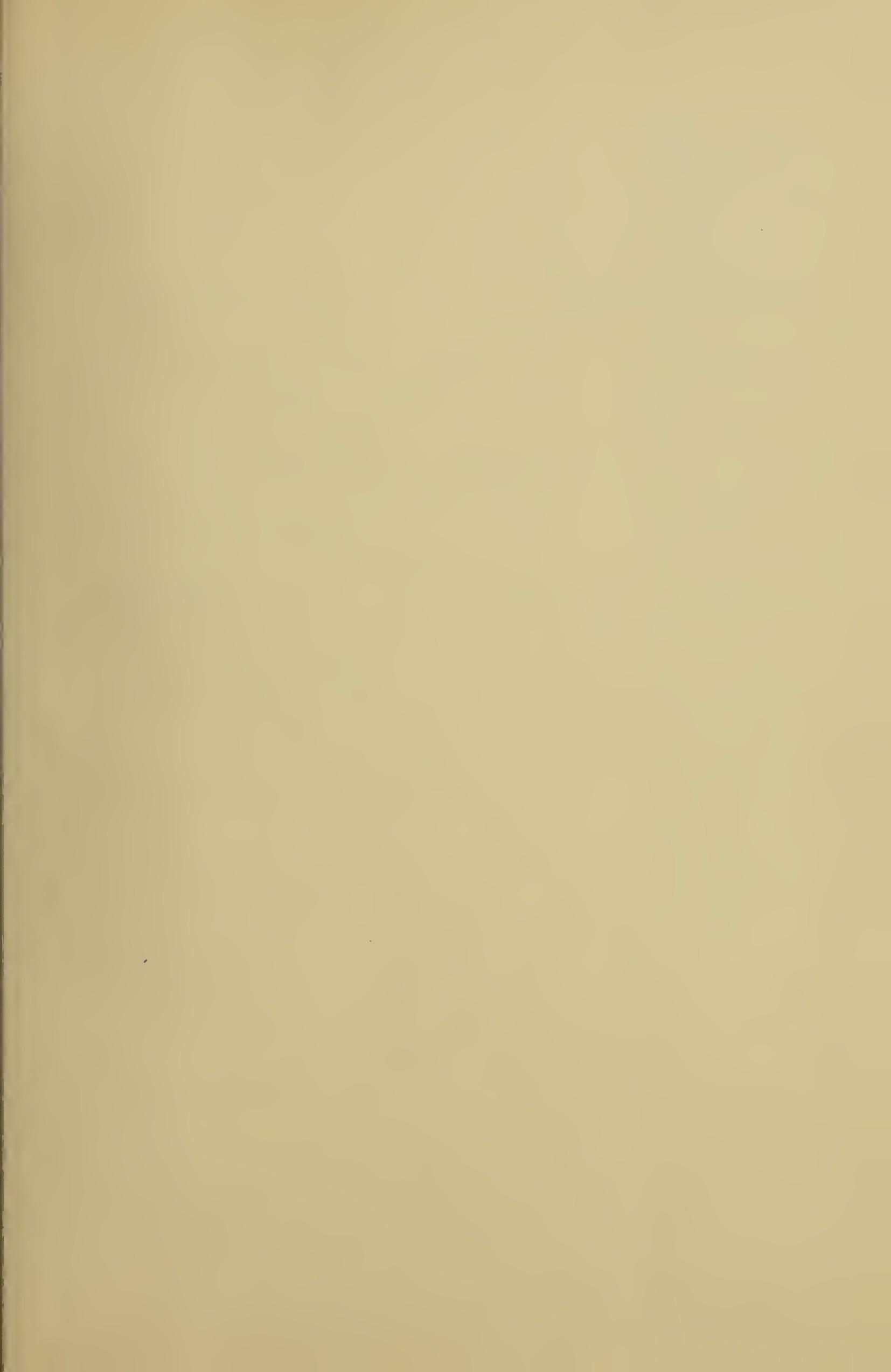
Their voices sang another's dream,  
laughed another's joy:

How long can you pretend  
to have what you have not?

Each costume shimmers dim,  
Each brushed-in smile grins on misshapen:  
a three-faced Judas stiffens, leers, wails . . .  
triple desolation.

How long can you live on  
with cindered souls?

Winifred Welch, '64



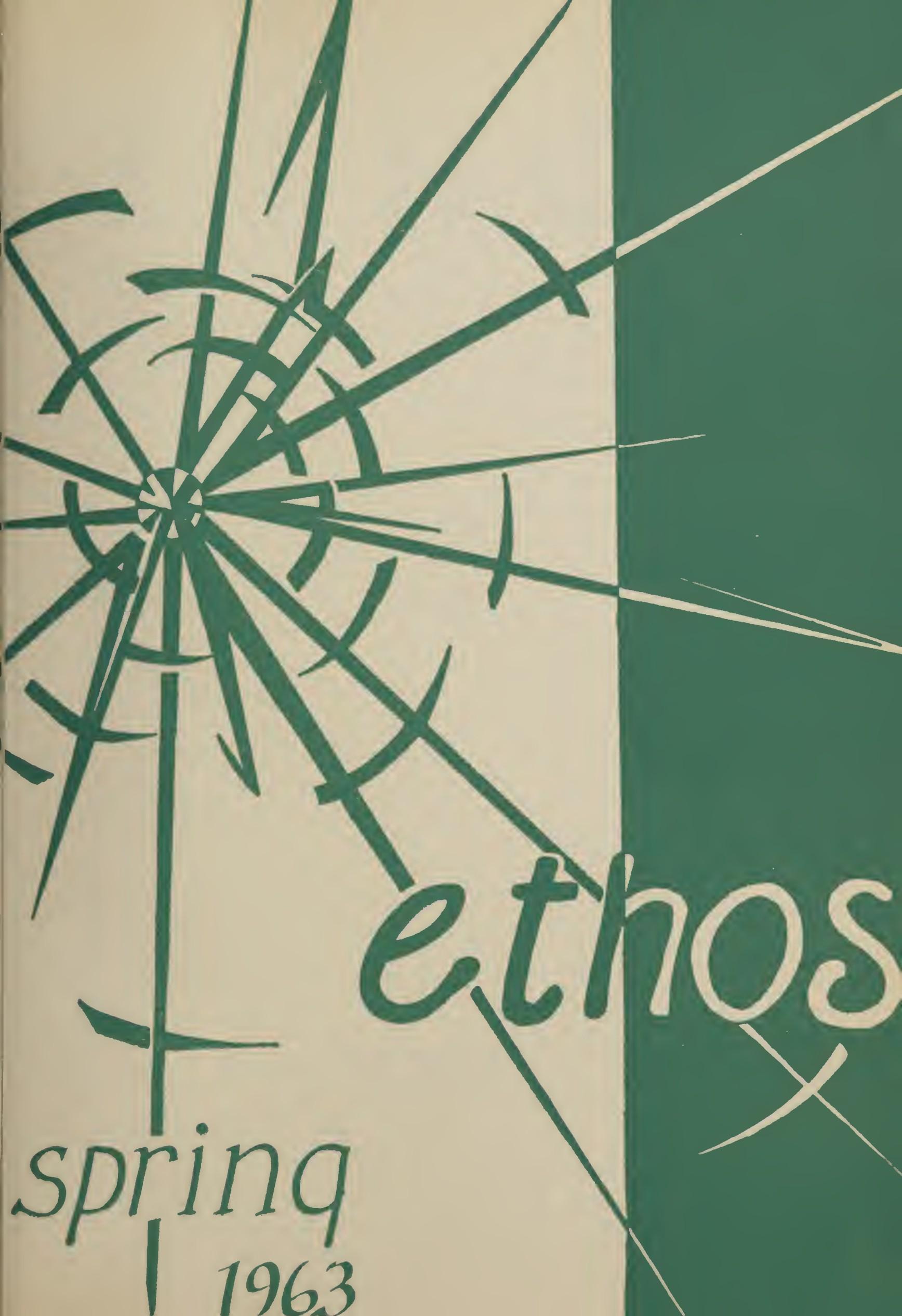
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Spring  
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# ETHOS

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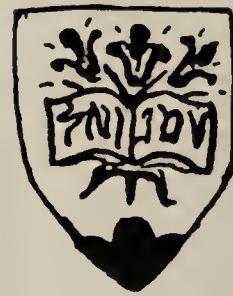
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# On Stage: Drama in Transition

*Mary F. Courtney*

The contemporary theatre is a center of a many-faceted and widely diffuse creative activity. Thus, from the beginning, any commentary on the quality, the direction, or even the motivation of the modern dramatists' work must at best be tentative and adequately qualified. One face of this multi-colored prism would reflect the experimentalists of the theatre. O'Neill's *Great God Brown*, Ionesco's *The Chairs*, Brecht's *Three Penny Opera* search out new dramatic metaphors that will heighten the artists' representation of human existence. Yet another face of the prism reflects, not the dramatic technician, but the artists' concern with the revitalization of art itself. Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* is an example. The philosopher and the social theorist have stakes in this vibrating complex. Sartre's *No Exit*, Romain's *Knock* are but two of a multitude of important plays with this direction. Then, there are the mythmakers, or perhaps better, the myth remakers. Giraudoux in *Tiger at the Gates* and Cocteau in *The Infernal Machine* are notable examples of twentieth century mythmaking with a meaning structure that plunges directly to the heart of universal problems but in a context that a perceptive audience can identify with.

One could continue almost indefinitely, describing first one, then another direction that this polychromatic art form takes, the result being an awareness of the diversity of form, of technique, of attitude that permeates contemporary life as manifested in her arts. But since it is my conviction that modern drama is evolving towards a wholeness, an integration, totally different in kind from that of Greek or Shakespearian drama, I would

like to discuss what I think are the signposts, the forecasters of a new dramatic attitude. It is also convenient to note that the order and beauty that suffuse Greek drama originates primarily in the religious and ritual superstructure. It is just this cosmic architecture that is the Apollonian, the harmony-giving element, in a tragedy like the *Oedipus Rex* where the Dionysian *persona*, Oedipus, is the focus of great disorder.

In the polyethical, polytheistic world culture of the mid-twentieth century, where can we look for a universally consistent value structure to vitalize drama and give it the serene beauty of a Sophoclean tragedy, or the baroque majesty of a Shakespearian tragedy? Modern man, if T. S. Eliot is to be taken as a kind of spokesman for our age, is not fulfilled in a world fragmented by his affinity for seeing the many and his inability for recognizing the one. And modern drama is a witness to his uneasiness. O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* is a relevant example of a metaphorical presentation of man being destroyed by a world he has created for himself but which has outgrown him and resists his domination. At least the creative minority has objectified the sterility that petrifies the inner humanity of man, the hardness that sets in with pure rationalism, undiluted realism and naturalism, and nihilism, only to mention a few key attitudes that prevailed in earlier drama. I think that a reality that can be perceived can be objectified in art, and in this way be deeply felt. This reality can become the object of experimentation. In the case of drama, the artist has been able to perceive the monstrous ineffectiveness of man's present mode of being that is not com-

mensurate with his total human capacities. He has been able to heighten this perception with action, plot, character, metaphor, etc. . . . and with this he has brought reality to the level where it has been deeply felt by his audience. The artist has objectified his audience's inner nostalgia, that often bitter ennui that seems always to feed on itself. *The Misunderstanding*, an early play by Camus, is perfect as an example of this hardly humane desperation for liberation from the "silences" that confront man in a life without unity, without direction.

It has taken a long while for the creative minority to make their perceptions felt. But they have been a preparation. They have permitted man to look at the many superfluous appendages of a now disinherited tradition that he has been clutching to himself in an effort to give security to his life. One obvious example is the rationalists' rejection of organized religion and, following this rejection, an atheistic or at best an agnostic appreciation of the existence of God. Yet these same rationalists, who would in theory reject the Protestant ethic and all of its religious implications, would at the same time try to find meaning in the forms of the ethic divested of their transcendent meaning. This does not seem to have satisfied man's need to project the importance of his life beyond the contingencies of the now.

What do the important dramatists answer to the need of man to have a mode of transcendence? I think that it is not too optimistic to say that the best modern dramatists have come face to face with this problem. And the future will judge them in proportion as they witness the reality of the dilemma and in proportion as they present man challenging it and deriving meaning from it.

Today I think that the audience can feel the exhilaration and adventure that a theatre open at both ends offers. By this I do not mean to infer that the modern dramatist is a radical or an absolute liberal. Actually, paradoxical as it may appear, the artist must of necessity be somewhat of a conservative, using the language, the concepts, the forms that tradition has conditioned before he came to use them. But the artist is challenged by the task of seeing through tradition, of seeing beyond what are the deadening vestiges of an exhausted tradition to something more real, more beautiful, more true (if we believe

with Teilhard de Chardin that man is continually evolving into a higher, more complex being).

One cursory glance at a listing of the dramatists that do seem to be reaching out to touch a higher reality, something richly meaningful for men of the future who breathe air that has been scented with the grandeur of Greece, of Rome, of the high Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and we discover poets. Poetry forces itself down, deep into the well of the soul where man's being, his needs, cannot hide beneath appearances. Poetry seems to be the harbinger of a new and vital drama. And the greatest contribution that poetry gives to the drama is a reinstatement of man as the "raison d'être" of the theatre and of its conventions. In addition, poetry brings not simply man, but man in his essence, in his dignity, to the theatre. Poetry can follow man to where his deepest and most universal self lies waiting, suffering, being alone, and by some miracle of creation inform its discovery with a beauty that can speak to other men waiting, and suffering. And with a great poet, the mysterious power of his creative vision will ultimately discover God at the spring of man's being.

Since poetry is the heightened expression of all of man's basic emotions, the reinstatement of the poetic mode of expression opens new doors for tragic drama. Modern poetry, with its consistent use of alogical progression and stream of consciousness, is perfectly suited for the artistic presentation of the tragic conflict of a hero who will fight destiny, the world, necessity and even himself. And poetry can bring the hero to a point of transcendence where his experience of pain and confusion is transformed into the kathartic experience of suffering.

Some poets who have aided in the re-enforcement of poetic expression in drama, Fry, Eliot, Garcia Lorca, MacLeish, Anderson and Claudel, have also given us their answer to man's need for a mode of transcendence. I do not mean to imply that the characters of a dramatist are merely his mouthpieces. Eliot in his *Three Voices Of Poetry* would contest this. It does not seem to be Eliot himself in *Murder in a Cathedral* but rather the character of Thomas, taking hold of reality, rising to inspiring heights, that elevates our sensibilities. But Eliot, the poet, had sought out the truth, the beauty, the

dignity of man. He discovered the character and the action of Thomas of Canterbury, and he tried to let poetry reveal his being. The characters of Claudel in *The Satin Slipper* and *The Tidings Brought to Mary* effect the same type of transcendence. Dona Prouheze and Violane come to face evil, battle it, and through grace rise above it. Fry's characters find transcendence in love. His poetry is lyrical and optimistic, delighted with itself, and his people are essentially like it. MacLeish in *J.B.* would satisfy J.B.'s longing for a reason to live by answering, Love! Yet his desperate cry in the midst of sorrow is no kin to the species of love that animates *The Lady's Not For Burning*.

Another immediate source of drama is existentialism. Of course, action has always been the implicit subject of the dramatist. But with society's explicit awareness that man must make decisions in his life, that he must choose to be; with this awareness there is less chance of drama becoming preoccupied with the accidents and in so doing misplace entirely man's essence. Henry Montherlant in *The Queen Dies* presents a profound, moving

drama of a strong man caught and destroyed in the endless conflicts between good and evil and the necessity of acting in the face of the problem. Sartre and Camus are two other notable examples of artists that take many themes for their work from the existential crisis.

This entire commentary is limited by the fact that I can only make inferences from the plays that I have seen and read and there are of course many more plays that would perhaps alter greatly or contradict these assertions. Thus, in the interests of sanity, this presentation has been informal. Nevertheless, I feel that our modern stage in its state of transition cannot leave the spectator without a sense of the more beautiful, more true things to come. With the practical reality of a world-culture imposing itself upon the not so distant horizons, drama will indeed have to readjust its traditions; the critics will have to begin to start with Aristotle's questions rather than with his answers and it seems to me that the signposts are there that indicate that this is happening. There is experimentation, poetry and man.

## Some days—everything's a mess

Joyce Hallisey, '63

They sat facing one another—  
the girl with the blue scarf and the man who wore a flower.  
Was it he

who first mistook the white lace cloth  
for the napkin on his knees  
and tugged too hard—

Or she

filling her cup who over-poured?

They sat facing one another—

the man with the blue scarf and the girl who wore a flower.

Was it she

who shattered  
the vase that scattered the sugar

Or he—

who salted his tea?

Bernanos:

# The Diary of Grace

Mary Alessi, '65

"As long as we remain in this life we can still deceive ourselves, think that we love by our own will, that we love independently of God. But we're like madmen stretching our hands to clasp the moon reflected in water." These quiet words of the Curé d'Ambricourt in *The Diary of a Country Priest* surrender an interpretational clue to the novel's supraliteral significance.

The *Diary* is a story of sin and grace—the dynamics of their coexistence and their interaction. God is a real character in the *Diary*, the Absolute for or against Which all action is directed. The Curé d'Ambricourt is His image, the alter-Christus. Satan, too, is an objective existent who finds his persona in Chantal, Dr. Delbende, and in the devouring hate of the Comtesse. The Curé is an amalgam of godlikeness and humanity. He symbolizes the moral victory of identification with Christ in His poverty and suffering, as well as the paradox and mystery that inheres in a freedom surrendered to the will of God. We can find a patterned underscoring of this theme in the novel's subplots, in the brilliant spiritual triumphs of the minor characters. Through them we watch the slow and dramatic "rebirth in grace," the return to childlike surrender of the self as the only true way to confront God.

I think the child symbol is the most potent reinforcement of the overall symbolism of the *Diary*. Its periodic recurrence in every major scene implies a key-like significance. At the outset of the novel, Curé de Torcy defines the role of a priest: to keep the "soul of childhood" alive in the world. Sin comes with the loss of innocence, the denial of the "sense of powerlessness" which is the only honest definition of man's role in the God-man relationship. Conforming to this concept and symbol, the Curé d'Ambricourt equates his prayer (a powerful element of the novel), with the "first clumsy steps" of a child.

As he becomes more and more childlike, the Curé rises paradoxically to a mature interior spirituality. Significantly, after the purging of his "dark night" experiences, he throws his arms about young Sylvestre Galuchet and "sobs on his shoulder." The Curé becomes a hero little by little as he bares to the reader the terrifying, strangely beautiful implications of the Christocentric life. He must be a father and a child. But the coexistence of these roles seems to involve a contradiction which is only resolved in the subplot of the Comtesse's "conversion." Although the Curé repeatedly addresses her as "my daughter," she writes: "I hope you won't be annoyed with me for regarding you as a child. Because you are!" With this recognition, the "child-Curé" symbolically achieves the integration he has been seeking—the unification of two commitments in the flesh and in the spirit.

The character of Louis Dufréty is an antithetical presentation of the same symbol. He embodies the puerility and fantasy experience of the child. Shrinking from self-confrontation, unable to define his relations to God and men, he can never break through the self-induced neurosis of the perpetual role-player. In a letter to the Curé, his concluding exhortation, "Come quickly," is metaphorically interpreted as a "child's cry," and the "showing-off" quality of a subsequent letter parallels this. Yet, it is in Dufréty's tenement apartment that the Curé dies, whispering, "Grace is everywhere . . ." The man's childish uncertainty contrasts with the Curé's heroically child-simple surrender to Grace.

Military images function to define the meaning of Bernanos' novel. Reality, behind the peaceful facade of a country parish, unveils as a battle similar in dramatic tension to Milton's angelic war. Like Michael, the Curé faces Satan as a "soldier on the battlefield." In an emotionally taut scene with

Chantal in the churchyard, he allies himself with the forces of God, "I shall not accept your challenge. God accepts no challenge." Chantal's interior torment is figuratively described as a "battle," or "revolt." Like Satan, she is "struggling against the current of life, . . . wearing (herself) out in absurd, terrifying attempts." The subtle reference to Joan of Arc, "she who died on May 30, 1431," is artfully operative. She is the "last real" soldier-saint, but her battles are still being symbolically waged. The Curé's "armament" is his awareness that "grace is everywhere." Thus, he can pursue the Comtesse until she is forced to accept the schematic enormity of reality, and can say finally, "God had need of a witness, and I was chosen."

Pathological images persist in the *Diary* gradually becoming ominous leitmotifs. The Curé's "bouts of pain" that faintly echo the sin-grace duel are presented as literal actualities in the novel. Sin is described as an "abscess," a "wound." The Curé's cancer is unidentifiable at first, a secret, mysterious force ravaging his body. But in his pain, he can find an objective basis for identification with "Christ in agony." The disease forces

him to "live on bread soaked in wine." Chapter by chapter, the allusions to disease recur until they reach their climactic height in the prophetic lucidity of the Curé's realization, "I am alone, utterly alone, facing my death." Like the Christ of Gethsemane, he cries out, "My death is here . . . I am afraid (and) shall say (it) . . . and not be ashamed." Paradoxically, it is this very parallelism that causes him to hope for a transcendent union with God. In typical child imagery, he envisions that he will one day waken "on the shoulder of Jesus Christ."

From the pages of Bernanos' *Diary* emerges one of the most striking ethical symbols in modern literature—the man who is made in the image of God. His is not the equation Milton's Eve sought, but rather an approximation through realistic awareness of God's Infinity and man's limitations. The Curé's search is the Telemachan motion of all supernaturally aware men toward their place of rest in God. Through the subtle didacticism of the *Diary*'s symbols we see how man can strain his being beyond the mere "reflections" of the moon.

## Humptimus Dumptimus

*Mary Valley, '65*

Humptimus Dumptimus in muro sedet  
Humptimus Dumptimus magnopere cecedit  
Neque omnes equi, neque viri regis  
Humptimum Dumptimum refecerunt.

## Johannes et Jilla

*Mary Valley, '65*

Johannes et Jilla in colle iverunt  
Situlum aquae ferre  
Johannes cecedit et caput derumpit  
Et ea post eum se volvit.

# A NEW BROOM

Carol Ann Glowacki, '63

"Well, you're home," Helen turned from the sink as Mark let the back door slam behind him.

"Sure, I told you I'd be home before noon today, so here I am. . . ."

He was pleasant and unusually cheerful as he stood his gun in the corner. Windburn and a healthy fatigue recalled the days she first met him—"a fair and strapping lad," her mother had said. Now he was home; another day for the same routine.

"Have a good trip?" she asked blankly.

"Great." He dropped his canvas jacket on the floor. "Wait a second 'til I open the bag." Reaching into the pouch, he carefully fished around for something.

"Oh, Mark, not on the floor—please. Couldn't you take that down cellar first?"

Mark pulled out two limp hare by their hind legs and laid them on the sideboard. They stared coldly at the ceiling, blood spilling off their fur in jelly-like spots on the sink.

"Don't worry about the mess; I'll clean it up." Before she could object, he lifted a pheasant out of the bag and held it close to him so that its back reflected the light shafting through the window. "Look at the colors, Helen. . . . Ought to be good for tying flies, come spring." He fanned the tail and wings in front of the window, watching the rust, red, orange, and blue-green spectrum appear and disappear. "I didn't expect to get anything . . . not on the first morning."

"Mark, for God's sake, I just cleaned the sink." She pushed in front of him to sponge up the blood and throw away the dried leaves that had clung to the hare. He backed off.

*She worries too much about this damned house, he thought. Lots of people do house-work and it never rubs off. . . . Not a hair out of place . . . a few years ago she wouldn't have . . .*

"I'm sorry," Helen sighed, straining. "I didn't mean to snap. . . . Was it cold up there?"

"Umm . . . ? No, it wasn't too bad. Had a fire going . . . lasted until morning both nights." Thinking about the trip, the spark that was there a minute ago flared up again. "But let me tell you what happened . . . get the knife out of my left pocket, will you?" He turned to the sideboard and started running water through the carcasses. ". . . In the morning, I took a walk up over the ridge that runs along the back side of the cabin . . . you know the one. Well, I was going through the junipers . . . and a hare took off in front of me. I shot . . . and, you know, it was funny, but the rest of the day seemed charmed. Oh, I didn't bring much home, but that isn't the point. It was the cleanest day I've ever felt. It kind of pressed against me like a fresh towel or a sheet that's been hanging in the wind. Do you know what I mean?"

Helen stood beside him with her arms folded and stared down at his hands as he talked. "Would you try not to splash so much? . . . I'm not sure I *do* know what you mean." She just watched his hands and thought of how many times she had asked him not to mess up the house. *I don't mind a house that looks lived in*, she thought, *but a barn. . . .*

Mark grabbed her around the waist. "Helen—why don't you come with me next weekend?—Why don't you?" He felt her pull back from his wet hands. "We can go up to the cabin and do some hunting, if you like. . . . We used to go." *Sure we used to go, then the house started getting too dusty to leave—even for two days.*

Helen turned. "I don't know . . . it sounds like a good idea . . . but I hate to leave everything for next week."

"Come on, it'll be the best thing for both of us to get a little air once in awhile. You



could double up this week . . . or let things go . . . we could be out of here Friday afternoon the latest."

Things that happened the past few days began coming back to him. *I want to tell her*, he thought, *but right now she'd only brush it off.*

She stood in front of him, her hair like chestnut in the late morning sun. "Why do you want to go again next weekend? You haven't got out of your clothes yet today." She didn't want to think of going out there with him right now.

"For the love of Mike, Helen, who's around

here to mess anything up?" He saw it coming; he bared the wounds again. Each time they argued it came out eventually. "We might as well get right to it this time, Helen. If things keep going this way, there never will be anyone to live in this house."

"That's right, blame me. I suppose I can work miracles with just the flick of a switch."

"I didn't start to blame you until you decided that if you couldn't have kids, you wouldn't want them anyway. God damn it, Helen, you can't get up in the middle of every night to do housework!"

"I don't want to talk about it." She closed

her eyes and put her hands up to her hair. *Let it pass*, she thought, *let it pass*. ". . . What would you like for luneh?"

"Nothing!" he snapped. "I want to talk about it. I want you to know how good I felt coming home today . . . and then how lousy I felt when I realized I was going somewhere else for my satisfaction." He twisted her by the elbow and made her face him. "Do you hear me?"

She stared up at him. *I knew he was like this . . . or I might have guessed.* All the excuses she could find were coming to her defense. *What is he talking about? He's probably had plenty of women*, she thought to herself.

Mark laughed. "You really are a sight standing there fuming—with your mouth open."

"I beg your pardon," she answered coldly. "Finish your story before my curiosity gets the better of me."

"Listen, I didn't mean that I . . ." He sat down at the table. ". . . Have some coffee and I'll tell you what happened."

"I don't see how you can be so calm . . . if this is your idea of some kind of joke . . . or whatever . . . I don't understand any of it. . . ." She brought the cups and sat down.

"Everything happened in the craziest way. I don't know where to begin exactly, it's so mixed up. . . . I didn't want to go out to the cabin in the first place, but I had no choice. It was either stay here and argue with you about the usual things, or go out alone and try to find some kind of change of atmosphere. . . . Well . . . I was in the middle of the godawful woods, walking around by myself . . . I started to feel peculiar. It was beautiful when I went out . . . the early sun and the pine smell seemed to fill up my head so I don't remember anything but that moment . . . there. I was uneasy—the way you get when you're expecting something to happen, or someone to come . . . it was dull, and kind of stuffy. The fact I was alone, in some ways disgusted me, but in other ways it made me glad.

"It was the first time the air and trees had that effect on me, made me feel so clean . . . and yet dirty—you know, the kind of person you don't want to stand near because someone will think you know him. . . . I don't know whether it's this house or not, but it felt good to be out. The more I walked, the stronger the feeling got inside my head. Call

it anything you want . . . tension, or stimulus maybe, but it was there. . . . And as I reached the top of the ridge, the hare jumped out in front of me. In that instant, when I shot, everything changed . . . I was master. . . . Whatever had preyed on my mind disappeared and I took over again . . . conquered it. I was free, and clean . . . the cleanest I've been in a long, long while. . . . I didn't want to stop hunting then; I kept combing through the briars. . . . Can you see how strange it is?" He studied her face for some reaction. *Does she believe me? She probably thinks I'm crazy . . . or perverted.*

*Nothing could be that way*, she thought. *It doesn't make sense.* "Mark, I don't . . . I'm not sure what you mean. Have you been drinking?"

"No, damn it." He couldn't get mad at her now. "Helen, think for a minute. Don't you understand . . . doesn't it make a difference to you that I felt that way . . . so good, in fact . . . and so free?" He leaned forward across the table trying to make it plain.

Helen sat firm in her chair and looked out the window. "I don't know, Mark. I don't see how anything could be like that."

"Then . . . then never mind that right now. All I want you to do is come out to the cabin . . . out of the house."

*I don't feel hemmed in anymore*, he mused. *No matter what, I can't feel hemmed in because I don't care. All right, I care, but she doesn't want to help. We can't be alone forever in this museum. Helen, please come . . . please . . . come. . . . Begging to himself, he put his cup in the sink and began to salt the earsasses for the freezer.*

Helen walked up behind him. "If it'll make you happy, I'll go with you. But I've never felt like that any of the times we went on a trip."

"We haven't been away together for more than six years, Helen. A lot has changed since then. . . . It's just that I wish you would want to come."

"I do want to come with you," she replied slowly.

"Then it's settled. I'll leave the office at noon on Friday, and we can be out of here by two o'clock."

By the time Mark got home on Friday, Helen had found her old canvas jacket and trousers in the attic, and had packed them together with her vest and boots. The ammunition and food they would need was at the

cabin; Mark had only to put the guns and clothing in the trunk of the car while she locked the back door.

The ride to the cabin became more pleasant as they drove away from the city, but Mark could tell it was going to be hard. For the two hours they rode, he spoke no more than three or four words while Helen looked out the window and mumbled an answer as they passed the harvested fields and squat farm houses.

The cabin was set far back in the woods, away from the main dirt roads and noise. It was closed in the warmth of the trees, and some laurel still grew where it had once been deliberately planted; but the rest of the place was running down. The trees had lost branches across the front patch of lawn, and the pine needle mat was thick and springy under foot.

"It looks worse than it actually is, Helen, so don't start to worry about it." He tried edging into the conversation as he handed the shotguns out of the trunk. "Here's the twelve . . . and the twenty. . . . Want to bring them in and take them out of the cases? I'll get the rest of the stuff. You know, we've got enough time for a short walk today—so we can make an early start tomorrow."

"Sure, I'd like to go sight-seeing. . ." she pushed the door open with her elbow, "What a mess! You haven't swept the floor in at least six months." She dropped the guns on the sofa, threw off her coat, and hurried in to the kitchen. "What if someone should come in here, Mark? Wouldn't you be ashamed to have them see this place?"

He was right behind her. "Will you stop? We're supposed to be here relaxing. Come on outside and let that go for now." He pulled her out of the cabin by the back of her skirt. Another time, the joke would have lasted.

"Honestly, Mark, you should know better than to let that cabin go. We'll *have* to clean it up later."

They walked out into the open air and climbed the ridge in back of the cabin. It was a mild day for November; the sun beat through the trees like a waterfall, and a few reminiscent flowers nosed up from the pine needles on the ground. Crisp green smells and crunching sounds rubbed against them as they walked. Mark wanted to say something about the feelings he had had and the way it had begun, but it was warmer in the

quiet. Down below, they could see the cabin and the car as they walked along the ridge in the sunlight.

"Well, what do you think? Was it worth the bother to come up here?" He picked a flat, mossy rock that was part of the ledge, sat down and lit a cigarette.

As she stood behind him, Helen could see the mountain range growing into the next county and hung with fog that seemed to slide into the valley. "I don't feel anything, yet," she answered in a matter-of-fact tone.

Mark smiled. *She'll get the air into her and she'll calm down. . . . So nervous standing there.*

*He knows, she thought. He knows I can feel something . . . he wants me to . . . I wish I really understood what he meant.*

He stretched out his hand, she took it willingly, and half in a daze, smiled back at him as he stood up. "Let's go back down to the cabin, Helen, it's getting late." He took her by both hands and drew her close. His eyes were calm, and their polished brown looked softly and heavily into her face.

She spun around and tugged his hand. "Let's . . . I'm starved."

*Bitch, Mark thought. Tag, I'm it . . . all right, I'll play. . . . "What are we having for supper?"*

*"I don't know . . . but I'll race you down," she called back over her shoulder. Not now, not yet . . . , she ran ahead of him thinking, we could have stayed home if it's going to be now.*

"I know a short cut . . . I'll be there ahead of you," Mark retorted. *She would run.*

"You'll never catch me!" she laughed back at him.

After supper, Mark lit the fireplace while she cleared the table. There were too many things to do before she could go in and talk to him. . . . She kept thinking how she felt when they were out . . . as though what Mark had described to her was penetrating . . . somehow. *Uncomfortable was what he said. . . . That's how it feels.*

The night came in heavily. Before she had a chance to scratch the dust out of the corner, Mark called to her from the living room. "Helen, can't you leave that junk for tomorrow?—At least wait until you can see what you're doing. Come on in here and sit down . . . fire's going now."

She went into the living room and eased herself onto the sofa beside him. "You win

... I mean, I really can't see what I'm doing. I'll leave it for later."

He lifted his arm around her shoulders. "Warm here, isn't it? It'll be a great day tomorrow ... it couldn't miss."

He stared at the shotguns in the rack over the fireplace. *Funny, she hasn't used that twenty gauge in quite awhile ... wonder if she remembers. Right now, I could probably make her forget about the house ... floors ... isn't that dumb? She doesn't work that way ... anymore.* . . .

He pulled her closer to him. "What time are we going out tomorrow?—Shall I set the alarm?"

She looked up into his face, her eyes as green as the fog-covered mountain. "We've got the whole day if we don't make it out early."

He stood up from the couch. "I think I'll be up . . . why not let me wake you?" Stretching out his arms, he yawned, "Coming to bed?"

"Not yet, I want to stay up and think for awhile." It seemed a good excuse.

"All right, I'll put another log on for you. Don't stay up too long . . . you're liable to catch a draft." *Don't push it*, he thought, as he went off to bed.

*Time . . . time . . . I need more time . . . to think . . . about everything. I couldn't go to sleep now . . . even if I wanted to. He told me that the woods gave him satisfaction . . . or was it the shooting? I felt it today . . . just on the short walk. I'm sure I felt it. There's something strange about it . . . like premonitions, or superstitions, something holding itself up against my skin . . . so I can feel it . . . and not feel it. I don't like it . . . not because it's his feeling . . . or maybe it is . . .*

She sat up for the rest of the night, thinking and half sleeping in a dream of logs . . . sparks . . . woods . . . and clear, strange smelling air. For a while she watched the firelight play on the stocks of the guns . . . guns. . . . *He said that when he shot, it was there with him . . . in the shooting, there's the feeling. . . . Master, he said, and clean . . . must be . . . like the fire . . . eats away at you . . . don't know it's gone . . . or quenched . . . until it happens. That's the freedom. . . . It's all in the shot . . . half-shot . . . big-shot . . . one-shot . . . master. . . . The fire died down; Helen slept.*

Mark was up first in the morning. "Come

on, night watchman. We're supposed to be going in a few minutes." He nudged her awake. *Damned suspicious mind she must have had last night.* "Coffee's on the stove if you want some now."

"Thanks . . . I guess I fell asleep last night. I didn't think I was tired at all." She rubbed the back of her neck as she scurried into the kitchen. *I think I understand it now . . . I think. . . .*

The sun was almost up, and the thin, damp smell of harvest and dew pushed through the air toward the ridge. This morning they headed for the thickest part of the woods. Mark said there was always some game in there . . . not too many folks liked tramping through the heavy brush. He and Helen wore their canvas suits to keep the briars out of their skin. She used to think it was funny to get dressed up like this until she got a couple of good gashes in her thigh. She never minded going . . . seemed to enjoy herself as far as Mark could see. . . . And it had always been a good time.

He had taught her to handle the twenty gauge; she had a good ear for sounds, and a quick reflex action—he could expect her to take care of herself. "I hope you haven't forgotten what you knew." He turned toward her as she passed through the brush behind him.

"We'll see," she smiled back at him. She walked along parallel to him, carefully and quietly, being sure not to catch her feet on any of the vines that grew across the path. She could feel the breeze on her face and hands, soothing as a soft brush or spilled talcum. By this time, the sun was well up, and the rustling noises of the woods coming alive again played around inside her head. *Now I see why he liked to come up here . . . even the ground breathes. . . .*

Mark stood at the edge of a wide patch of underbrush and caught her attention. "Helen! Go around to the left and be ready to take the first shot."

She came down through the clearing, stood opposite him. "All ready. . . . I'll pace you." Every step was sure, and every sound grew louder in her concentration. She held the shotgun in front of her, finger at the safety, ready to slide to the trigger as soon as she shouldered the gun.

Thumping across the briars and junipers, Mark scared out a hare. "There he goes!" he shouted as quickly as he stopped. The shot

rang out and echoed back . . . the hare lay still. She hadn't forgotten.

"That was almost easier than I remember it being . . . if we can find him." She pointed to the edge of a fallen tree trunk. ". . . There."

Mark bent over and pulled the hare from the leaves. ". . . Be a shame for him to go to waste."

Helen smiled as she watched and released her tension a little at a time. "I think you were right about getting out of the house." She took a deep breath and stepped closer. *Master was what he had said.* "I can feel it. . ." *I can feel it growing. . .*

"I'm glad you think so now," he answered. "You may change your mind by the time we get back to the cabin." They were on level ground now, and walking farther along the paths.

"I don't mind it half so much as I thought I would." She put out her hand, "May I carry it? . . . After all. . ."

He laughed as he gave the hare to Helen. She was starting to be the same as she used to be. *She could be the same,* he thought as he watched her stuff the hare into the game pouch at the back of her jacket. "Let's move on down to the gulley . . . try the edge of the field. Not much'll stay here now."

They moved slowly, covering every inch of space between them. Mark kept his eyes to the right and left almost simultaneously. Helen looped her gun across her arm, and put her hands in her pockets. *It's funny,* she thought, *how much difference the fresh air can make. I probably should have come out here sooner . . . at least to clean up that cabin. . .*

Mark trampled the brush-piles and de-

cayed tree trunks . . . the next one would be his. "Helen," he waved through the trees to call her back to the path he had taken while she was daydreaming. "Over here. . . . There's some ground cover I want to go through. Stand on the other side just in case?" He could call his shots easily, but not if the game darted out in the wrong direction.

"Be right there," she called from behind the fallen trees. *It's beginning to touch me again . . . I could almost feel great now myself . . . it's closing in . . . I can see it . . . I see what's wrong. . . .* "All right. I'm ready."

He started slowly through the brush, his back toward her. She'd be able to see if anything ran out the other way. The wind picked up, but she felt warm, almost suffocating. Perhaps she had walked too much . . . it was the breeze pushing her. . . . *It's getting so hot . . . the trees are bending, but it's too hot. . . .* She held the shotgun ready . . . *I can feel it choking me. . . .*

"Mark!" she shouldered the gun and saw him spin around. "Here!" she squeezed . . . and the shot went white in front of her eyes. . . . He buckled, and fell into the junipers.

Then it started to come . . . the satisfaction. . . . *The . . . satisfaction . . . it's great . . . really. . . . Now I'm clean . . . I'm free . . . like the fire. . . .* She held the gun tightly and wiped her forehead with her sleeve. *I don't feel . . . anything . . . I could laugh . . . now . . . I can feel it. . . .* "Do you know that?" she screamed. "I can feel it. And now . . . it's done!" She yelled at the top of her lungs as she ran down the slopes toward the cabin.

The cabin was empty now . . . she could run. . . . The wind would keep the feeling free . . . and sweep the dust away. . . .

# The Connecticut Woman Who Jumped or Fell

Dorothy Lynsky, '64

The great MTA trains shape our lives.  
Daily, people squash

Cotton to wool  
Bracelet to button  
Holiness to sin  
Layer on layer

In the trains with the hollow ads staring down  
at them.

A lady pulls her purse and pretends  
The man with the pushy briefcase  
Isn't there.

Hundreds in dirty cars,  
Each one a commuter-unto-himself,  
Applauding his dominance;

“... there's no one here but me.  
crowds are hateful, there's just  
ME  
until I get out of here  
or get a seat.”

The pit turned red  
When the Connecticut woman  
Jumped or fell,  
And grey and red waxed brilliant as  
—just for an instant—  
The crowd stood envious,  
Then recovered as the lights went out.

Stillness . . .  
The trains can look so still  
With all the people out of them,  
With the hollow ads staring  
Only at the body.

The lady swings her purse at the briefcase  
And says, “God have mercy on her soul!”  
The man says, “Fool!”

# THE WAR

*Mary Ann McCarthy, '64*

Sikhim stood at attention; his rifle weighed heavily on his shoulder and he longed to be free of it. Out of the corner of his eye he could see Krishna beside him. They were both fifteen but Krishna's height and his strong body made him seem a man while Sikhim, small and slender, might have passed as even younger than his age.

Sikhim tried to focus his attention on the maneuvers that he and the others were performing, but it soon wandered. He thought of school. We would be in chemistry class right now, he thought, experimenting and figuring out something good . . . something important. Then geometry class with Dr. Balim—Dr. Balim of the old, torn, brown jacket and the wonderful brain. What was it he said on that day a month ago? That terrible day when the school had been closed?

Sikhim had been standing in front of the mud-brick school building, staring morosely at it. The rest of the students had left early in the afternoon, many in a festive mood at being released from school. But Sikhim had waited, hoping with a dim sort of hope that the building would not really be barred and bolted. His small hope withered and died when the caretaker finally emerged from the building and nailed an X of wood over the front door. As he had stood there watching, Sikhim was sure that he could see through the windows the spirits of rust and decay already at work inside . . . but maybe it was only the shadows of twilight flickering on the walls. He had heard quick footsteps and turned to see Dr. Balim, his sharp little face peering out from beneath a huge cinnamon-colored turban. . . .

"Ah, I was sure that I would find you here," he had said, "and you have not disappointed me, Sikhim. Come, we must talk." And he set off at a rapid pace with such fast, shuffling little steps that Sikhim had to run to catch up with him. They had hurried across the market

place where the ever-present cows lazied here and there and the women in gold and emerald saris meandered among the near-empty stalls searching for late bargains. They stopped beside the town well and settled themselves on a clay bench. Dr. Balim had begun twisting one of his golden rings, seeming to center all his attention on them. But Sikhim knew that he was preparing to speak; if his movements were rapid and jagged, his words were precise and orderly.

"Sikhim, I have been recalled to my post at the University and I will be leaving soon, but I wanted to speak with you once more."

Sikhim recalled with pleasure the many discussions they had had after class, some of them lasting well into the evening so that he had to run all the way home. His aching muscles and the angry words of his parents had been a small price to pay for his entrance into a new world—the Doctor's world.

Dr. Balim had continued, "It is most unfortunate, this war, for everyone, but in a special way it is so for you. As you may have guessed, the scholarship that I have mentioned in class would have been yours."

Sikhim had guessed it, but still, his heart thumped wildly at the words he had waited so long to hear. The scholarship was his. No, there was something wrong—*would have been* . . . it *would have been* his. And then his heart slowed. It was a heavy pendulum weighing down his body.

Dr. Balim had gone on, "Do not forget, Sikhim, that education is important. It is more than important to us, for four-fifths of our people are illiterate. It is our duty to better ourselves and then to better them."

Sikhim had heard all this many times. It was the Doctor's favorite subject. But now he stemmed the flow of familiar words and squinted at him like a little wizened wizeman.

"Ah, Sikhim, but you know all this—too

well, I am afraid. And so, I must remind you that there is something else, something that I have not taught you, that you will learn by yourself and this war may help you. . . .

"May help you . . . help you. . . ." The words had drummed in his head over and over again and now, marching in the blinding sunlight, Sikhim thought, help me learn! Ha! I do not want to know the things that war teaches, violence and treachery and death. His thoughts jammed to a halt as he collided with the back of the boy in front of him. The lines had stopped marching and were marking time. How stupid, he growled. How very stupid—this marching, this army, this war. And he hesitated before saluting the commanding officer, just a second, but the officer glared at him and raised an eyebrow.

After each of the officers had marched from the field in supreme dignity, the troops were dismissed, and Sikhim waited for his friend Tilah. Dusk dimmed the glaring sun a little as the two boys plodded home. Their gray shirts, hot and wet, stuck to their backs. Their feet, their legs, their arms ached dullly. Tilah began, "Can you believe that we have been training for a month?"

"A month! It seems a year at the very least, a whole wasted year." The bitterness sounded loudly in Sikhim's voice. "When I think of what we could be doing, Tilah, it starts a fire inside me. We could be studying and learning, going somewhere and being somebody worthwhile."

"That's for you, Sikhim. I would have stayed here anyway, even if there was no war. I wanted to buy a farm and some animals. But you, you could have had a scholarship like the boy last year."

Sikhim stared ahead directly into the red sun, not noticing its glare. "He is at the University now, studying government and . . ." He broke off sharply and proceeded in silence for awhile.

Tilah said, "Well, you know, Sikhim, with this war and all, things have to be this way. It is good for us to be part of it all."

"You are right, Tilah, so right," a voice chimed in, a gay sounding voice. Krishna appeared beside them. He must be tired, thought Sikhim, but he moves easily as if no pain or weariness touches his body. And there is satisfaction, deep satisfaction in his face. Sikhim turned his eyes away abruptly and gazed out over the fields, pink in the

fading sunlight. Even the bright yellow flowers of the jute plants were rose-tinted. The boys had left the cluttered streets and houses of the town behind them and walked along the serpentine dirt road which wove through the farm land. The farmers led their oxen out of the fields toward the thatched stables while light and shadow darted everywhere.

"This is why we must train and fight," murmured Krishna, and he paused by the side of the road. "It's this land, so beautiful and so good. We've lived here for ages. We've tamed it, worked it, loved it. They won't get it." He thudded a powerful fist into his palm.

Sikhim glared angrily at the others. Tilah seemed overcome with Krishna's enthusiasm and nodded rapidly in agreement. Krishna, spurred on by his own words was exultant. An urge flared up in Sikhim to erase the exultation. "You sound like a poet, Krishna, but are you sure that you don't want war only for the excitement of battle, so that you may use your strength to fight and even . . . to kill? This is not what we have learned is right."

Krishna's eyes showed astonishment, then pain and at last became thoughtful. "Do you remember, Sikhim, the day that we smiled as we watched the ceremony of the Jains? They poured their tribute of vermillion and crushed poppies and bananas over the head of their huge idol, staining him a blood red color. They could not use real blood, for they cannot kill any living thing. We smiled then as we talked of them because they are so extreme and because we are not like them. Have you become a Jain, Sikhim? Is that why you speak as you do, or is there, maybe, another reason?"

Krishna paused for a moment and his next words were sharp and strong and clear. "I want war, not for the reasons you have mentioned, Sikhim, but to remove the enemy from our lands. He is encroaching more each day. If I must kill, I will do it because it is the act of a soldier, of a man. I will not run away from manhood or from war. I think that none of us should."

Anger gripped Sikhim so fiercely that his voice died. He felt the redness spread all through him as he stomped away from the others. When he came to the yard of his house he brushed by the cream-colored jute fibers, drying on the branches of a scrawny tree, and scattered them here and there. Only

later, during his dinner meal did the violent feelings seep out of him. Then he rested.

That evening Sikhim sat under the stars with his parents. The younger children were in bed and he could hear their chatter growing softer and softer as they dropped off to sleep. It was one of those rare times when neither his mother nor father had some small task to do.

"How is the military company?" his father asked.

Sikhim answered with a smile, "We are becoming fierce and warlike, father." He noticed his mother's head jerk up.

"No more than necessary, I hope," she murmured and she peered at him closely. "I wish, my son, that you were back in your school."

Sikhim was pleased at her words. "I wish it too, mother. Then I would have the scholarship and an education at the University. I would be of use not only to my country but also to my family. We would move, mother—out of this little cottage and into the city."

His mother said softly, "No, no, I would not want to leave."

"Well, then we would have a better house here, more land. . . ."

Absently she nodded and said, "That would be nice, that would be nice." But Sikhim didn't feel that she meant it. He was confused.

"Wouldn't you like things to be that way, mother?"

His mother paused, then began slowly, "No, son, it is not necessary for things to be that way; they are good now."

"But, mother, you said that you wished that I was in school. All these things would follow."

"My son, I want you to be in school because I know that you are not happy in the military company. If you were happy there, I, too, would be pleased. We want no miracles from you, only your respect and your love. We are happy as we are."

Sikhim spun around to face his father, hoping for a different response. He only nodded in agreement and Sikhim was truly bewildered. Then anger again sprang up in him and he thought, if they want to remain in a cave when there is sunlight outside, if they want to think what they have is important, let them. There is more to life than this. Dr. Balim and others have said so. And

if I have the opportunity, I will go and find it. His anger softened to sadness. But I do not have the opportunity.

Sikhim wandered away from his parents toward the clump of tamarisks set far back from the road. He sat there on the earth with the moonlight and the chirping sounds of night around him trying to rid himself of the bitterness he had felt for so long—a whole month now, a month of marching, shooting at targets, presenting arms, standing at attention, surrounded by a group of boys all as falsely patriotic and bloodthirsty as Krishna. A month of this with anger always in his heart, and now . . . he was weary of it and longed to set his painful burden aside. But how?

He thought of the ideal. He could picture himself being called out of the ranks and led to the commanding officer's quarters. There he was, standing in defiance before the older man who would say, "Dr. Balim has told me about you, Sikhim. The Doctor is now in charge of strategic planning for the government and has asked that you be given a scholarship to come to the University to study under him. If you want the scholarship, it is yours." Sikhim could see himself thanking the officer and leaving the room enveloped in a cloud of pleasure. And then, once outside the door, he could see Dr. Balim twisting his golden ring and peering at him through squinted eyes. "So you have accepted it, Sikhim. I wondered whether you would. Apparently you have not learned yet the 'something' that I mentioned." And he shook his turbaned head sadly and faded as a picture of the land sharpened into focus. Sikhim saw himself walking on the familiar road, hemmed in on both sides by the broad fields. They were golden in the strong sun of midday and full of activity, that of men and animals, of plants and insects. Sikhim remembered Krishna's praise of the land. It might just possibly have been sincere. And in his new frame of mind, the possibility grew to probability. He thought of Tilah and his calm acceptance of the war and of life in general. Was it just the indifferent reaction of a slow-witted boy or was there some wisdom in it? He recalled the words of his parents and their happiness with nothing . . . or maybe it was something.

I don't know . . . I don't know . . . I don't know . . . ran on in his head. I don't know for sure if they are right, if they have some-

thing that I don't have. If it were chemistry, I would know, or algebra. But I feel that they have and I feel that I, too, may have it soon.

Sikhim stood up and stretched the soreness from his body. As he left the grove and headed toward the small cottage, he felt a hint of morning in the air though dawn was still a few hours away. His head was light and his mind, tired, but a persistent thought demanded attention. What would I have said to the commanding officer about the scholarship? Would I have weakened? Would I

have stumbled in my speech? What would I have done? And the answer came—I would have refused it; thank you, sir, but I'll hope for another opportunity at another time. Right now I should be here in this company. I don't want to run away . . . no, that's too childish. Krishna would know how to say it right and mean it. He would say it in a manly way. Just for a moment Sikhim was disturbed but then he remembered. What Krishna knows, I will know too.

And there was Dr. Balim nodding in affirmation.

# The Becoming

*Eileen Sullivan, '64*

Jody looked around him. There were people—people everywhere, more people than in the whole state of Tennessee, he guessed. Panic gripped him as he wondered which of the laughing or grim were his relatives. How would he know them? It was warm, damp and foggy, but there was still some snow left. He stood on the platform for a few minutes wondering what to do. Then he edged his way through the scramble with his cloth suitcase in one hand, and in the other, the lunch his mother had packed for him last night before he left. So far this afternoon, he hadn't been hungry, but he had bought two boxes of salty popcorn because it lasted a long time; he figured about fifty miles a box.

Most of the way he had been drowsy, but when he wasn't, he watched the train tracks as they seemed to switch, and he watched with resentment the people his father would have called bigshots; they puffed greedily on store-bought cigarettes, they laughed so that everyone in the car should know how much they enjoyed themselves, yet, they looked fresh and clean and stiff. His own suit, one his Ma had fixed over from his Pa's wedding suit, was still big in the shoulders and baggy in the legs, but he had room to grow in, his

mother had said. Besides, it was better than anyone else had in Bush Mountain.

When he entered the station, he froze at the gate. It was so big that he couldn't see from where he was to the end. And there were dark people in long silk robes, people he had seen only in the picture books Maudie Simson, his teacher, had lent him. There were niggers too, like the ones in the lowlands at home, but even these were different, with their gay laughter and light-hearted walks; and sloe-eyed Japanese women passed him with their mincing gaits and clacking chatter. Jody wondered if there were very many white people in New York City. He leaned his long skinny frame against the doorway.

"Where's the snack bar, Sonny?"

"I don't know." Jody blushed when the man turned out not to be Uncle Joe. When another lady asked for the subway, he pointed in the direction opposite him; any answer was better than none, he figured.

"Are you Jody Ames?" a deep voice came from behind him.

"Uncle Joe?"

"Yes, Son, and this is your Aunt Mae, and your cousins Susan and Fred."

Jody nodded shyly and said "Howdy Do."

He noticed their starched clean look, and the flowery smell that made his Aunt Mae unlike his mother.

"We brought this jacket of Daddy's for you because it's so damp outside. Mommy says that you probably never saw snow. How do you like it?" Susan chattered.

"No, we don't git much snow down thar," he muttered with his father's labored accent. Frustrated at his feelings of ignorance and embarrassment, Jody snatched the coat from her and pulled it on.

"You talk funny!" Susan giggled.

"Susan!" her father shook his finger. Jody thought she looked like a pink fairy child enveloped in white bunny fur.

Fred looked like a shorter, fatter rendition of his father and he had sore red blemishes on his face. Joe put five tokens in the turnstile and they pushed through the frightening closeness of people onto another train. They said they lived only two stops from the station so it wasn't worth battling the morning traffic with the car. Little of what they said made sense to Jody. The air underground was foul and smoke-filled; someone near him reeked of whiskey.

At Bush Mountain, Jody's mother went about her daily chores. She had skimmed the cream from the milk pail and was churning it into butter for dinner.

"Where do you think Jody is now, Ma?" Lolly the littlest ran her finger inside the cornbread batter.

"I reckon he's in New York b'now; probly met Mae an' them too."

"Do you think Jody might like it there an' never come home ever again?" a tear rolled down her face and onto her neck.

"Of course he'll come back! Now don't you go gittin' all red-eyed an' puffy. Jody's all right. Here, put this butter in the ice box. Pa an' the boys are near-starved, I'm so far behind in my work," she touched her eyes with the corner of her apron when Lolly had toddled away. "C'mon fellas, dinner's ready."

"Them ham hocks smell good, Jessie."

"Thank ya, Pa. Now eat up good everybody; I want to finish up this mess so's I kin write to Jody this afternoon."

So Jessie wrote a friendly, inquisitive and loving letter, telling about the corn sowing, asking him about the city and all about the relatives.

It was on the dining room table Tuesday

afternoon when Jody came home from swimming meet practice with Fred. Without speaking, he snatched it and ran upstairs to his room. The envelope still smelled like the grain thrash that sifted through the mountains in the spring. He walked over to the window streaked gray with last week's snow. When he tried to picture his family, they seemed not a part of him at all, and their faces were blurred and far away like the cars looked from the dirty window. Four-thirty. He and his Pa used to be finishing up the milking now. He wondered if his cow, Beulah, missed his frequent slaps. Suddenly, his room seemed too bright and over-cheerful, the bed too well-made, the chair too soft—so he lay on the cool waxed floor and cried, crumpling the unopened letter in his fist.

He could hear Mae walking back and forth in the kitchen below. She always set the table as though company were coming. Everything was flimsy and shining. His Ma would have liked that stuff, but she probably would never have it. He sat at the desk then and began his letter.

Dear Ma,

This here city is like a circus. It's hot an' the noises never stop night or day. Did Pa an' the kids finish the sowin'? Does anyone help him with Beulah? She never did let anyone milk her but me. . . .

No one had called him to supper. Joe's soft rumble and Fred's higher tones were punctuated with clinking silverware. It gave him an eerie feeling of being talked about. A milk bottle crashed to the floor accompanied by reprimands and Susan's "I didn't mean to," and finally the quiet happy lull of after supper television. He put his head down on the desk for a while but woke suddenly when he heard Susan scuffing toward his room. Jody hunted for a secret place for his letters. Just as she knocked and peeked around the door, he hid them under the blotter.

"May I come in Jody?" the fairy child's voice was pleading.

"Wal, I was gonna . . . wal, I guess so."

"I got some chocolate cake and some milk too, if you let me come in."

"I said come on in . . . but . . . ."

"But what?"

"Oh, nuthin'," he said peevishly, at the same time happy to be visited.

Susan edged her way into the room balancing the plate and glass shakily. "How come you didn't come to supper, Jody?"

"I didn't feel like it," he said, eyeing her as he licked frosting off his fingers.

"Oh. It didn't feel like supper without you down there. I spilled a whole quart of milk, you know. Boy, was Daddy mad."

"I heard."

"Jody?"

"Yeah."

"Will you tell me a story?"

"Isn't it your bedtime?"

"I still have some more minutes."

So Jody sat on the too soft chair and pulled her onto his lap.

"Well?"

"I'm trying to think. How 'bout Cindy rella?"

"No, Jody, I heard that one millions of times."

"Red Ridin' Hood?"

"Uh uh," she shook her head vehemently.

"O.K. I'll make one up."

"Once thar was a boy who came to the biggest city in the world . . . ."

"You, Jody?"

"Nope. Wal, anyhow, he lived with his relatives, sorta like me and he missed everything about his home; his Ma, 'cause she was . . . wal, 'cause she was his Ma."

Susan nodded in agreement.

"An' he missed his Pa 'cause his Pa taught him how to fish and hunt and farm; an' 'cause he was funny too, the way he'd laugh when a bull chased his son across the field. Why, he nearly died laughing the night Lolly stuffed her brother Tom's nose and ears with lard."

"Really? How did he breathe?"

"Oh, I don't know, I guess he found a way."

"Did your mother laugh too, Jody?"

Jody looked at her suspiciously, "No, she

didn't. She got all excited when Tom woke everyone up yellin' his head off, and the more Pa laughed, the more jittery she got. Finally she threw a whole fistful of lard at him and then all of them laughed for the longest time."

"That must have been something!"

"Yeah, but the time when Lolly got asthma an' couldn't breathe, his Pa carried her down to the doc in the valley—five miles down the worst road in Tennessee without movin' a muscle. Ma, she made pretend that thar warn't nuthin' wrong, an' she kept everyone so busy they forgot to be scared."

"And what about the relatives?" Susan yawned sleepily.

Just then, Mae called up the stairs, "Susan, you get to bed now, and don't forget to brush your teeth! I'll be up in a few minutes."

"Quick, Jody, tell me about them."

"No, not tonight, I have to think about that story too. Maybe tomorrow night."

"Promise?"

"O.K., promise."

He sat there quietly until he heard her patter into her bedroom. He went to his desk. It wasn't so bad here . . . and besides, gittin' an education of the world takes time. I guess I gotta give it a chance. He tore up what he had written and began his longest letter again.

Dear Ma,

I like this here big city fine. Ol' Tennessee don't have nuthin' like this un. The lights beep on an' off all night outside my winder. . . .

When he had finished, he undressed and pulled on his fresh, clean, stiff pajamas. He wondered if his Pa would think he looked like a bigshot. It didn't really matter, he just wondered.

# The Curious Cat and the Cute Little Canary

Diane Allenberg, '64



Cat Seemuch saw much from his desk one hundred-thirty-three stories above noisy Park Avenue. Even when he napped his daily cat nap, he kept one lid open, fearful lest he should miss any eventful event.

One afternoon while Cat Seemuch was pawing his curtain back in place so he could see more, he saw a cute little canary connoitering on the ledge of the 133rd story of the Reach for the Sky Building across the street.

"Quick!" he called to his fellow co-cats. "There's a cute little canary standing on the Ledge of the Reach for the Sky Building one hundred thirty-three stories up. You cats, call the cops."

And then he fled: down the one hundred thirty-three flights, across the furious flow of traffic, up the one hundred thirty-three flights and out to the cute little canary on the ledge of the 133rd story of the Reach for the Sky Building.

"Hail to thee blithe spirit," mewed Seemuch in his milkiest mew. "Are you a damsel in distress?"

The cute little canary looked down at Seemuch disdainfully. "What are you—some kind of a nut or something?" she chirped.

Then she pompously puffed herself up. Seemuch, thinking that this was the be-all and the end-all here, reached out to rescue her, but just then the cute little canary fluttered her feathers and flew off, leaving Seemuch reaching for the empty air.

The cops finally came. They were just in time to carry away the crumpled corpse of the cat while the cute little canary looked down at them from her perch on the 133rd floor of the Reach for the Sky Building.

MORAL: Cats who live in glass houses see much pain.

# The Square Caveman and His Scrawny Mouse

Diane Allenberg, '64

Once upon the empty void there clicked a square caveman whose only fellow-like square was a scrawny mouse. This caveman was christened Sapiens, but the rest of the chicks and the cats just called him Sap for short.

One day Big Daddy called Sap up to his pad.

"Like man," he let him have it cold, "you're square—like ya not really swingin' with the rest of the cats. It's a hang up if you don't bug out."

Sap wasn't really flip over the idea, but he took his scrawny mouse and they began bopping across the blank void. After a while they really began gassin' it up. They got real hip about "Do it Yourself" gags, and soonsville Sap and his scrawny mouse had themselves like a real gone pad, not like them caves, but way out with windows and doors—Coolsville. He dug up a slip of a chick also cut out four cornered. Then, since the man, the mouse, and the more had made their rack, they decided they'd better cool in it. They did and lived happily ever bopland.

MORAL: Things ain't always as they appear, sometimes there's more to the jazz of the square.



## The Comeback

Under the bridge a troll's been waiting . . .  
five years since the road closed.  
his feet are grey with cold. Only his eye moves  
lidless in a groove repeating.  
If it would shut human—  
he could cry out or sleep.  
But he's part of a fiction  
even the weather cannot cancel . . .  
so he waits.

When grass fired the water green  
(in a warmer time)  
he sat with reason. Black cars  
bumped boards over the bridge once. . . .  
While father read the comics  
children would run to shout him out

TROLL

three  
o'clock  
afternoons

through ant-burnt planks above his head . . .

It's a Monday morning now—  
hardly a matter of getting up for him—  
the troll is thinking  
as he re-fits his knee  
to the hollow beneath his chin.  
(Meanwhile, three miles  
the other side  
of the new black asphalt highway. . . .)

In that full hour before waking  
Stephen J. lay in a lovely balance  
Feeling grass mountains firm under his head.  
Light slicing through the shades  
hesitated like a raw butterfly on his lids as  
(careful not to crush the town around him on the spread)  
He stretched.

Another Stephen opens his eyes  
deciding not to wince  
even in the face of the snow-bloated sun  
until he goes to bed.  
The day's resolved in neat brown parcels  
as he knots his narrow tie—  
cereal in a box,  
three kisses down the steps for  
Ellen,  
Lisa,  
Tish—  
off in a grey hum. . . .

The day's unsettling to  
(back under the bridge)  
the troll—hearing  
higher than the wood stumps  
along the dirt road  
Stephen's car invisible  
on the highway sawing leaves.

The brook's frozen—not one threat of motion.  
He could list so many things wrong.  
First,  
that car. . . .  
Untroll-like he's caught a cold.  
His nerves are bad.

In Stephen's office there's  
an in box and an out  
staying pretty much even.  
For lunch he has  
hot-cardboard coffee  
and one carefully-wrapped sandwich  
sent up.

It's a strain reading foot-notes  
when the light gets thin around four  
and it's too soon for the desk lamp.  
As he jiggles the blinds  
to hoard light a while—  
Stephen sees  
a fog face  
heavy in the black glass—  
notices  
they're making eights across the street  
on ice leaking back into woods  
under the bridge to the troll—restless.

Snow-light shrivels; the sun falls flat.  
A coaching tree chameleon-shapes the dark—  
tonight's a troll  
humped alive over the white brook of road.  
The troll decides he'll run off or  
(it's been five years)  
at least moving slow—steady  
he can make it  
to where the highway turns  
into the dirt road.  
Then—fingers unknotting slow—  
he'll stash the painted words behind a bush—  
Detour this way—the quiet error of a one-way sign  
straight up.

He's waiting now under the bridge  
not for that grand catastrophe.  
(He'd forgotten the ant-burnt planks above his head.)  
There's rising action as  
Stephen J. starts home  
on time  
to Ellen, Lisa, Tish. On the highway  
black by six  
it's easy to turn off wrong  
down a dirt road. He could hear  
it coming, spinning through the rotted boards,  
settling into tin leaves on ice.  
There was hardly time to wince.  
Stephen J. crumpled  
head-toe  
back before waking  
in the eye of the troll.

For the troll—a recognition—an extra.  
He had wanted only  
the road open  
Sunday afternoons. Could he manage this?  
They'd write it up in screech-high columns  
(of course) with pictures of Ellen, Lisa, Tish.  
There'd be questions—  
in a hard light questions  
and answers—  
For the record they'd decide:  
“It appears, no doubt—  
how on a clear night. . . .”  
In the end he'd get full credit.  
They'd hesitate—then confirm:  
“It was a troll.”

*Joyce Hallisey, '63*

# *The Ungrammatical Princess*

*Karen Caruso, '64*

Far beyond the glass mountains, even past the plain of suede and buckram, lay the kingdom of Lyricana, a land of extraordinary wealth and beauty. The people of Lyricana were prosperous, happy, and extremely literate. No country in the universe boasted such well-fed and well-read citizens. The country abounded in poets, novelists, debaters, and the like.

This unusual preoccupation with language came from a deep feeling of patriotism. Some time long past, a sage had said, "If you really love the father-land, you will want to master the mother-tongue."

The king had heard it. "Such wisdom!" he replied. "Let this be the law of the land." It became domestic policy.

The country was presently ruled by an aged couple, King Homer and his gracious wife, Caliope. They were blessed with a lovely daughter, the princess Moira, on whom they lavished love and gifts. They were enormously wealthy.

Unfortunately, there was a single thorn in the side of the royal couple. Their daughter, the princess, had just passed her fifteenth birthday and was, as yet, unbetrothed—doomed, apparently, to a life of spinsterhood.

This was no small concern to the aged couple—nor to the citizens—for unless there was a successor to the throne, the country would lose its sovereignty and become a mere province. And that meant taxes.

In addition to her grace and beauty, Moira had tremendous wealth. Daily servants ar-

rived bearing coffers of silk, precious metals, and jewels. So great was the store that a separate palace had to be built in which to keep her riches.

And still the princess was unwed, for in spite of her many assets, she had one flaw. She was ungrammatical. This, in a land where children were soundly spanked for using a double negative, or sent to bed without supper for letting an "ain't" slip by. Where even the wizards, when casting spells or engaging in similar unnatural activities, took care that their doggerel scanned correctly and conformed to the classic concepts of rhyme and rhythm.

The king and queen were sore distressed. Spinsterhood—how dreadful! Often during the day, the king would pause in his royal duties and walk to the terrace overlooking the garden where the princess sat with her tutors. Leaning carelessly against the wrought-platinum railing, he would watch for a while, marvelling at her loveliness and wishing she were married. The case seemed hopeless. Suitor upon suitor had appeared to try for her hand. He would be dazzled by her beauty, entranced by her wealth, prepared to lay down his life for her sake. Then the inevitable would happen. She would say something—completely shattering all the rules of grammatical construction. The suitor would gasp, shiver with distaste, then dash from her presence.

The king remembered the last one. The suitor was Egroeg, crown prince of Sirrom,



one of the recently developed countries on the Dark Continent. He had been liberally and faultlessly educated at Oxford.

The princess had received her guest in her garden. The blooming young prince was quite taken aback by her beauty; he knelt and proclaimed his undying devotion; he even praised her bluebells.

"I say, what lovely blooms!"

The princess smiled. "Yes, they are quite fulsome, aren't they."

Behind the arras, the tutors groaned. "*Handsome, Your Highness—handsome.*" But there was more. The princess was warming to her subject.

"And I done all the work myself," she continued. (The crown prince frowned.) "You see the court is so noissome. . . ."

The tutors writhed in agony. "Noisy, noisy!"

". . . that I spend as much time as I can out here. I think hobbies relaxes one. Don't you agree?"

By now, the prince was backing away. "If you'll excuse me . . . a matter of state. . . ." He turned and fled, muttering dire predictions for ladies of fifteen who take spirits.

It was like that every time. The king and queen were desperate. They couldn't have an unwed daughter. It wasn't regal. What was to be done?

Many men of wisdom were consulted con-

cerning the matter. The best grammarians and rhetoricians were brought in. The grammarians drilled her on the rudiments of syntax. They explained carefully the agreement of subject and predicate, the use of expletives, the position of modifiers. The rhetoricians pointed out the structural possibilities of the tongue. They stressed the necessity for organization and development. And the linguists came in droves. They spoke of the history of their language, its development, its subtleties, its noble origins. On and on. Theories—parallels—metaphors. It was to no avail. The royal family sank into a despondency. A cobalt cloud covered the land. Time passed.

One day, two men came riding through the kingdom. The younger was Nerak of Osurac, a crown prince of the blood, noted for his charm, valor, and cleverness. With him was an unusual fellow. He was of some indeterminate age, about six feet seven inches tall, and weighed perhaps six stone. He was quite slim. On his head he wore a cylindrical hat about thirteen inches tall. It was chartreuse and bespattered with Prussian-blue six-pointed stars. His cloak was Prussian-blue and spattered with chartreuse six-pointed stars. He looked like a pole. His name was Pindar, the Wizard; and he was confidante and advisor to the prince.

Since the cobalt-blue was becoming car-

bon-black, the Wizard suggested they put up for the night. "We are close upon the palace of the aged king Homer and his graeious wife Caliope. And I am saddle sore. Let us stay the night."

Nerak agreed. He could not confess that he, too, was saddle sore. That would be unbecoming a crown prince. So he said, "Ah, yes. The horses are aweary. We will seek shelter for the night with the royal family of Lyrieana."

They approached the eastle and were immediately and profusely weleomed by the graeious couple.

"Weleome noble prinee. And you, too, honorable advisor."

Pindar preened. He dearly loved flattery. He determined that the stay should be a pleasant one. The guests were fed, then shown to their rooms.

The king said graeiously, "Rest now; we will socialize on the morrow." He left his guests and hurried away. There was a scheming gleam in his eye. He headed for the princess' suite.

The next morning, after a most tasty and nourishing repast, Nerak of Osurae was brought to meet the prineess. Nerak was not at that particular moment in the market for a wife. But one look at the prineess Moira sufficed to turn his thoughts from the yet unexplored valley to the glowing hearth and slippers. He bent to kiss her hand. He praised her beauty, her magnificenee, her charm. The prineess did not reply. Nerak thought, "Modest and demure, too! Ah, what a wealth I have found." He marveled that she had remained so long unbetrothed. He took his leave and praneed away, a Souza march on his lips. He went into the hills to bask in the blue mist and compose sonnets.

The princess watched him go. She, too, was entraneed. Sueh dash, sueh poise, sueh exquisite dietion! At this she wept. How could she possibly win Nerak. She had only to open her mouth to drive him thither. What would be her slip? A dangling partieiple? A fraetured idiom? She could see it now. She groaned in chagrin; then she deeided. She would not see him again. Better that than to wateh his horrified faee—then his baek as he dashed away.

Nerak returned from the hills. Clutching his sonnets in his fists, he raeed to the palace. The guards barred him from the princess' garden. "The princess will not receive you," they said.





"She wishes you to depart the land, never to return."

Nerak was crushed. He walked dispiritedly out into the cold blue fog, humming Chopin's "Prelude in C Minor" under his breath. Then he sought his wizard—to seek counsel. "Ah, woe is me, Pindar. The princess has rejected my suit. She will not see me. Alas, all is lost. It is the work of a fiend. I charge you to set things aright."

"Becalm yourself," replied Pindar. "Else I cannot concentrate upon my scansion."

"Are you conjuring?"

"Merely getting to the heart of the matter. A little introspection."

"Wrong usage," said the prince automatically. "Don't use your words so literally."

"I shall use them as I choose," replied the Wizard, raising his left eyebrow. "Would you care to debate the point?"

"Oh debate, schmate!" answered Nerak. "All this diction and rhetoric gives me a pain."

"Precisely!" replied Pindar, chortling with glee.

"Precisely what? Pindar! Are you getting foggy?"

"I beg your pardon! I was referring to the princess. This is her difficulty; she is ungrammatical. That is what drove the suitors away and why she is fifteen and, as yet, unbetrothed. It's what she is afraid to let you see. She doesn't want you to leave her."

"But I didn't leave her. She kicked me out!"

"It's not the same thing," answered Pindar loftily.

"Well, what do I do now?"

"I'm sure you know. Go to her now. I will sit here and contemplate the inevitable outcome. Hurry."

The prince raced back to the garden, singing the "Soldiers' Chorus" at the top of his voice.

The guards stopped him at the gate. "The princess will not receive you," they said again.

Nerak ignored them. He entered the garden. The princess was there tending her bluebells. Nerak ran up to her.

"Good day, fair one."

Moira turned in dismay. Nerak kissed her hand; then glanced at her flowers.

"Those is lovely bluebells," he said.

The princess gasped.

"What did I say?" he stammered, his face contorted. "Didn't my predeate agree? Oh, forgive me."

"Forgive you? I'd like to kiss you."

"Oh joy!" he exclaimed. "Let us approach your father."

The wedding was a grand success. When it was over, the young couple rode off toward the east. They were going to Osurae, where Pindar would join them later in his new official capacity as marriage counselor. When they turned for a last look at Lyriana, they saw the blue cloud go back up to the sky where it belonged.



# Thee End



**The Circus of the Sun.** Robert Lax. New York: Journeyman Books, 1960.

*The Circus of the Sun* is a paperback volume of poems forming one poem. It is a poem of the light and fullness of creation, of the circles and cycles of things, and of the tensions and precarious equilibrium of man in the midst of creation. The epigram is from Proverbs 8, 22-27: "I was set up from eternity, And of old, Before the earth was made. . ." The first lines propose:

*Sometimes we go on a search  
And do not know what we are looking  
for,  
Until we come again to our beginning.*

Morning, afternoon, evening, midway, night, are the divisions of the poem. It develops in images of circles, light, stresses and balances, moments: from the quest lines above, through the compasses of creation, the fields of morning under the last few stars and the setting up of the circus. The circus is explored in scenes, persons, performances, and lyric reflections on it all, moving through the fullness of day to nightfall. In the progression there is a strong sense of permanence, of cycle:

*By day I have circled like the sun,  
I have leapt like fire.*

*At night I am a wise-man  
In his Palanquin.*

*By day I am a juggler's torch  
Whirling brightly.*

The abundant *many* are sensed to be somehow very really *one*. The last poem sums up the plethora of the circus creation in the last words, wonder-struck:

*Have you seen the noon-day banners  
Of this wedding?*

The development throughout is leisurely as a summer's day. The elicited visions are lightsome, almost hazy with light, with an occasional silhouette-clear focus, and all highly empathetic:

*We the innocent grasses stand on tiptoe  
overshoulder  
each other, looking toward the circle's  
center,  
middle of the field where they stretch  
the skyworks.  
Birds dart over us, pulling shadows  
through us.*

The flavor of this poetry is faith: the affirmation of goodness and beauty, a certain enthusiasm of acceptance together with explicit acknowledgment of authority:

*The circus is a song of praise,  
A song of praise unto the Lord.*

The *persona* poems succeed charmingly in portraying character and catching the moment. Some are obvious: "Dog Act," "Snake

Charmer," "Ortans." Some are deeper: "Aerobat about to Enter," "Penelope and Mogador," "Rastelli." There is a gentle surety to the humor, a sort of vintage quality to the faith, and a viability of perspective in the book that suffuses it with lyric grace.

Kathleen Marotta, '64

**All My Pretty Ones.** Anne Sexton. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1962.

The flavor of Miss Sexton's poems is agnostic: "Need is not quite belief." Her preoccupation is not with light and creation, but with disillusion and death. Some of her titles are: "The Truth the Dead Know," "The Abortion," "The Hangman," "Woman with a Girdle," "Old." She specifically refrains from the kind of ultimate affirmation expressed in *The Circus of the Sun*. Her poems are primarily images and statements of ugliness, emptiness, acute pain and futility of seeking in a numb, Eliot-gray manner.

Three of the poems, "Old," "The House," and "The Fortress" fuse into an attitude akin to that of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach," and Archibald MacLeish's *JB*, a kind of "sugar-coated nihilism." It amounts to the clasping to oneself of some meaningful specific, in the face of the universal meaningless; "Ah, love, let us be true to one another! etc." Other poems seem to be a misconstruction of things due to the exigencies of the particular poem or sentiment. For example, in "With Mercy for the Greedy," Miss Sexton says:

*My friend, my friend, I was born  
doing reference work in sin, and born  
confessing it. This is what the poems  
are:  
with mercy  
for the greedy,  
they are the tongue's wrangle,  
the world's pottage, the rat's star.*

Even conceding the difficulties of living with sin and of defining poetry, to respect this sort of statement is difficult. If it is not quite a lie, it is yet not quite honest. Life and art are more than is here acknowledged or even permitted. Such shortsightedness is unwarranted. This abbreviated vision contrasts with the moment in *Macbeth* (whence Miss

Sexton titles her volume) in being far less adequately justified and much less manly than Macduff's valiant grief.

However, some of the poems transcend this uncreative, not to say inattentive, appreciation of reality. Sometimes this happens with *en passant* felicity:

*To be drunk is to be intimate with a  
fool.  
I will try it shortly.  
. . . I have worn  
Your cross, hung with package string  
around my throat.  
It tapped me lightly as a child's heart  
might,  
tapping secondhand, softly waiting to  
be born.*

Some of the poems defeat the oppressive Absurdity by intense absorption in some particular vision of good. The difference between this and Arnold's "love, let us be true," is the implication about the Great Absurd: not resignation to its brutal meaninglessness, but the inattention of one who cannot solve the Absurdity-Problem and is momentarily captivated by some thing definitely delightful, meaningful, excellent.

A certain *respect*—in the speaker-poet and in the reader—is established, with a certain *reality* (which is that which is respected). Here at last comes the assertion: not the warm, bright faith of Robert Lax, but the agnostic minimum of irreducible good faith and good will that makes life viable, the elementary trust and acceptance.

*. . . the orange letters that spell  
ORIENT on the life preserver  
that hangs by my knees;  
the cement lifeboat that wears  
its dirty canvas coat;  
the faded sign that sits on its shelf  
saying KEEP OFF.  
Oh, all right, I say,  
I'll save myself.*

Sighting four nuns on deck, the poet regards them out of her sober, rock-bottom emptiness, for a while, and at length expresses this startling and delightful desire (being a person of will, as noted):

*O God,  
Although I am very sad,  
could you please*

*let those four nuns  
loosen from their leather boots  
and their wooden chairs  
to rise out  
over this greasy deck,  
nodding their pink heads to one side,  
flying four abreast  
in the old-fashioned side-stroke  
each mouth open and round,  
breathing together  
as fish do,  
singing without sound.*

After the rather dismal precedents, "This is how I want to die," "Father, father, I wish I were dead," this relief from anguish, this actual creativity, is especially lovely: *creative absurdity*.

Whereas Mr. Lax's limitations are those intrinsic to man, human knowledge, and words, Miss Sexton is further constrained, in creating the language of the meaningful, by the dilemma of doubt. There is potential infinity to cries of grief and songs of joy, which partake of the potential infinity of human experience and utterance. But statements of aftermath, staleness, anticlimax, emptiness, insignificance, are strictly limited in possibility, in interest, in meaning.

Given their respective situations, each of these poets has acquitted himself well. Nevertheless, as Mr. Lax's poetry may be inaccessible or implausible to the agnostic, to the sensibility of acceptance Miss Sexton comes overconstrained. The authority of intense human feeling will inform, will validate poetry of doubt—but not forever. The truest poetry speaks the affirmative vision, looking on things and seeing that they are good.

*Kathleen Marotta, '64*

**Voices in the Snow.** Olga Andreyev Carlisle.  
New York: Random House, 1962.

Mrs. Carlisle's book is a literary record of her recent visit to Russia and of her exchange of ideas with prominent voices in contemporary Russian fine arts. One advantage, both for her immediate acceptance by her new Russian acquaintances and for our enjoyment of her remarkably unbiased view-

point, is that she is not a "foreigner" trying, with one exposure, to picture the artists of a new culture. Rather, Mrs. Carlisle is the granddaughter of Andreyev, a great name in the history of Russian letters. Raised in a circle of Russian émigrés who settled in France and kept vital almost every aspect of homeland custom, Mrs. Carlisle's return to Russia occasions no cultural adjustment problem.

Yet, despite Mrs. Carlisle's perfect command of the Russian language and possession of a family name admitting her to the artistically elite circle, she seems too absorbed in her medium and not sufficiently aware of her reader. There are a few quiet places in the book where the present transitional stage of Soviet art is mentioned. But this point of contact for an American audience is swallowed in silhouette-like descriptions that pass back and forth over anecdotes, literary figures, museums and hotel accommodations with what seems sometimes like a delightful dash of a paintbrush but is too often obvious oversimplification.

In a brief biographical postscript, the publisher reveals that Mrs. Carlisle is herself an artist. Perhaps it is this perspective that gives her book its predominantly pictorial quality; descriptions of flat expanses of white snow, the yellow fog that cloaks St. Petersburg (Leningrad), the powerful face of Ehrenburg, the Peredelkino cottage of Pasternak. There is no strangeness in her descriptions, no straining for the appropriate color or metaphor. But it is just this pictorial effectiveness that seems to militate against the reader's ever getting beneath such facile, charming verbal etchings.

The most vital and inviting aspects of this book are the spirit and vitality of the Russian writers that shine through every citation: a stanza from Evtushenko, a snatch from Sholokov's *And Quiet Flows the Don*, or a lyric moment from a Pasternak poem. There is too much suffering, too much dynamic, blood-drenched sadness here to muffle it with a soft, lyrical covering of snow.

Mrs. Carlisle's tangential affinity for the Russian language and for Russian culture effect a ready, smooth dialogue. But somehow one expects more: more difficulty, more conflict in the life of the artists, more depth.

*Mary F. Courtney, '63*

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